

Moral militants
The new middle-class dissenters

Jewish gold
The Nazis stole it – where is it now?

Imitating Emma
From students to stars via Edinburgh?



Page Three

Section Two, Cover Story

Section Two, Campus

THE INDEPENDENT

3,053

THURSDAY 1 AUGUST 1996

WEATHER Mainly dry and bright with sunny spells

40p (IR 45p)

Listen to me

I wonder if you are all living in another world in Westminster, a safe cocoon where the real world no longer touches you.

So, today I'm going to ask you to try and imagine what you would feel if a gunman burst into the House of Commons and shot dead the Prime Minister and 16 MPs. Maybe your reply would be that nothing like that can ever happen to you. I thought that too. I thought these things happened somewhere else, to someone else.

But if what happened in Dunblane Primary School had happened in the House of Commons, would you all still be dragging your heels and trying to appease the gun lobby? I very much doubt it. On 13 March I lost my daughter Joanna. She was nearly six years old. Alison, the baby sister she had known for only four-and-a-half months, in a few years time will have to start school. On that day, when Alison takes her seat in the Primary One classroom, I want all of you to come up

An open letter from a Dunblane mother to six Tory MPs who ruled out a handgun ban as 'impractical'

here to Dunblane and explain to her the decision you have just taken.

Will you be able to guarantee her safety? Will you be able to tell her that another Dunblane could never happen again? Because if there is no ban on guns, you will be able to offer Alison nothing.

I've listened to some of your attempts to justify this decision: "It's not the guns that are to blame, it's people." But I sat through the days of the Cullen inquiry and what came out was that there is no way you can decide on the suitability of someone to own guns. You can never foresee every circumstance they will find themselves in.

However, one clear fact is there to see – if guns were not legally available, such crimes could not be committed.

ted. If you do not understand this, then whatever reasoning you are using is flawed.

Over the weekend I went for a run in the car with my family. We pushed Alison in a buggy around the shores of a loch. My mind drifted back to the days when we did exactly the same things with Joanna, but she is no longer here and sometimes it feels like she's been wiped off the face of the earth.

I shared her life for five-and-a-half years, all her excitement and enthusiasm at school, and all the promise she showed. I wondered if she would be happy, would she be a friend to her sister, would I be her good friend? All that has gone.

Now I have to explain to Alison why Joanna is not here any more. And I have to accept that

Alison will never know Joanna.

You say people who shoot for sport would be disadvantaged if guns were banned. But do you value life less than sport? It worries me that you are accepting influence from the wrong places.

The police, who uphold and enforce the law, agree that guns should be banned. Yet, all of you seem to be ignoring this advice and instead accept the views of some fellow MPs and the influence of the gun lobby. Why? Surely there comes a point when we all have to admit our society is no longer safe, and that to make it safer we should take guns away. Listen to me. I and the other Dunblane families are not the first people on earth to lose their children through violent death. But our children were murdered. And all of you appear to be turning a deaf ear to everything that we are saying.

Ramona Ross

MPs defend 'balanced view' on gun controls

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

Some Tory MPs on the Home Affairs Committee and gun club members reacted yesterday to the future which greeted news of their decision not to recommend a ban on handguns, but others were unavailable for comment.

John Greenway, MP for Ryedale, spoke to BBC radio's 'Today' programme on his car phone on his way out of the country. "We have concluded that a ban on handguns would be impractical," he said.

"We took the view that it is not legally held firearms that cause the problem in this country. It is the way that firearms certificates are issued where the law needs to be strengthened."

"While we entirely understood why people might want to ban handguns in the light of Dunblane, you have got to sit down and look dispassionately at what that would mean, what the effect would be and would it, in all honesty, prevent that kind of incident happening

again in the future. "We came to the balanced view that it would not."

Sir Ivan Lawrence, the committee chairman, was in Hong Kong, and issued a short statement through his Commons office saying: "Nobody has seen the report yet, since it has not been published. There is therefore nothing to be said until publication on 13 August."

Warren Hawkesley, MP for Halesowen and Stourbridge, told Talk Radio: "I personally do not believe there is evidence yet to satisfy me to get rid of handguns entirely."

Mr Hawkesley, whose hobby is shooting, said security should be aimed at keeping guns out of the wrong hands rather than banning their sale completely. "You can't legislate for a madman if someone is determined they want to go about using a gun", he said.

"Nearly all guns used in crime are illegal anyway."

There was no answer on any of Dame Jill Knight's numbers: her London flat, her home in her Birmingham Edg-

baston constituency, her Commons office and her secretary's home number.

Walter Sweeney, defending a majority of 19 – the smallest of the six – in his Vale of Glamorgan seat, was on holiday and "uncontactable" according to his constituency office.

David Ashby, recently deselected as the Tory candidate for his Leicestershire North-West constituency for the next election after an unsuccessful libel action, did not return messages.

Most numbers for the MPs' constituency association offices were engaged, after being published in the Sun.

The National Pistol Association said the select committee had come to "a sensible decision". Ian McConchie, its general secretary, said: "We're very happy with what is a sensible decision. The sport is participated in by a million people from a whole range of different backgrounds. They are normal members of society. There are bank managers and road-sweepers and people who work

for local authorities – it's a real cross-section of society."

He denied that a ban on handguns could have prevented the Dunblane massacre.

"We understand there have been two massacres during the last 10 years and we have deepest sympathies for those involved but a ban on guns would not have prevented them happening," Mr McConchie said.

"It could have happened using any type of weapon."

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation welcomed the select committee's suggestions.

Dr Colin Sheddin, its Scotland region director, said: "The committee took evidence from a wide variety of sources, including very senior police officers."

"They stated it would be impractical to introduce a ban on handguns."

But the association would welcome the recommendation for closer checks on people applying for firearms licences.

Guns row, page 2
Bryan Appleyard, page 17



Stuff of life: Scientists handle frozen embryos in the laboratory. Each stick like this carries one, three-celled embryo
Photograph: Tom Pilsten

Today: the end for 3,000 frozen embryos

GLENDIA COOPER

Thousands of embryos are to be destroyed today after a last-ditch appeal to the Prime Minister failed to gain a six-month reprieve. This morning clinics will begin thawing the 3,000 embryos. Fertility experts called it an "appalling waste" and at a London press conference couples desperate for a child pleaded to be able to "adopt" the embryos.

The Human Fertility and Embryology Authority (HFEA) said that legally embryos must be destroyed after five years unless both parents consented to further storage. A spokeswoman said it would be "legally and ethically wrong" for couples to adopt an embryo without parents' permission.

As the deadline approached, scores of clinics were handling calls from couples who had been untraceable or had not replied to letters. At Bourn Hall, where the first test-tube baby, Louise Brown, was created, the medical director, Peter Brinsden, said 800 embryos would still have to be destroyed. "None of us wants to destroy a single embryo. It's the first time we've destroyed an embryo without the express permission of the couple," said Mr Brinsden, who once threatened to go to prison rather than destroy the embryos.

Peter Bromwich, medical director of Midland Fertility Services, where 90 embryos will be destroyed, said: "It has been very badly planned by the civil service. We have been telling them for years that this would happen. I... would not want the embryos destroyed but we have to abide by the law."

The Life Campaigns pro-life group delivered a letter to Downing Street and the Department of Health demanding a six-month moratorium on destroying the embryos. Spokesman John Scarisbrick said 130 couples from around the world had come forward to "adopt" embryos. Three couples appeared at a London press conference, including Norman and Catherine Walker from Hitchin, Herts. Mr Walker, 39, who called the HFEA's actions "disgusting", said they had tried for four years for a child and his wife had had a miscarriage. "We would love a child but we are also trying to save a life."

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Beautiful or repulsive, foul or fair? – find out on page 3



QUICKLY

Moynihan for Lords

Colin Moynihan could return to Parliament as a peer, after a High Court ruling that his half-brother, the late Third Baron Moynihan of Leeds, forged divorce documents relating to his fourth marriage. Page 3

Botham stumped

Ian Botham said he was "astounded" to have lost his libel case against Imran Khan, estimated to have cost more than £500,000. Page 5



DAILEY THOMPSON

He wrote Olympic history with two golds. Each one a thriller in 10 chapters.

OLYMPIC LEGENDS BY SWATCH.

swatch

news

Blair runs ahead of Major in Olympics

JOHN RENTOU, Political Correspondent

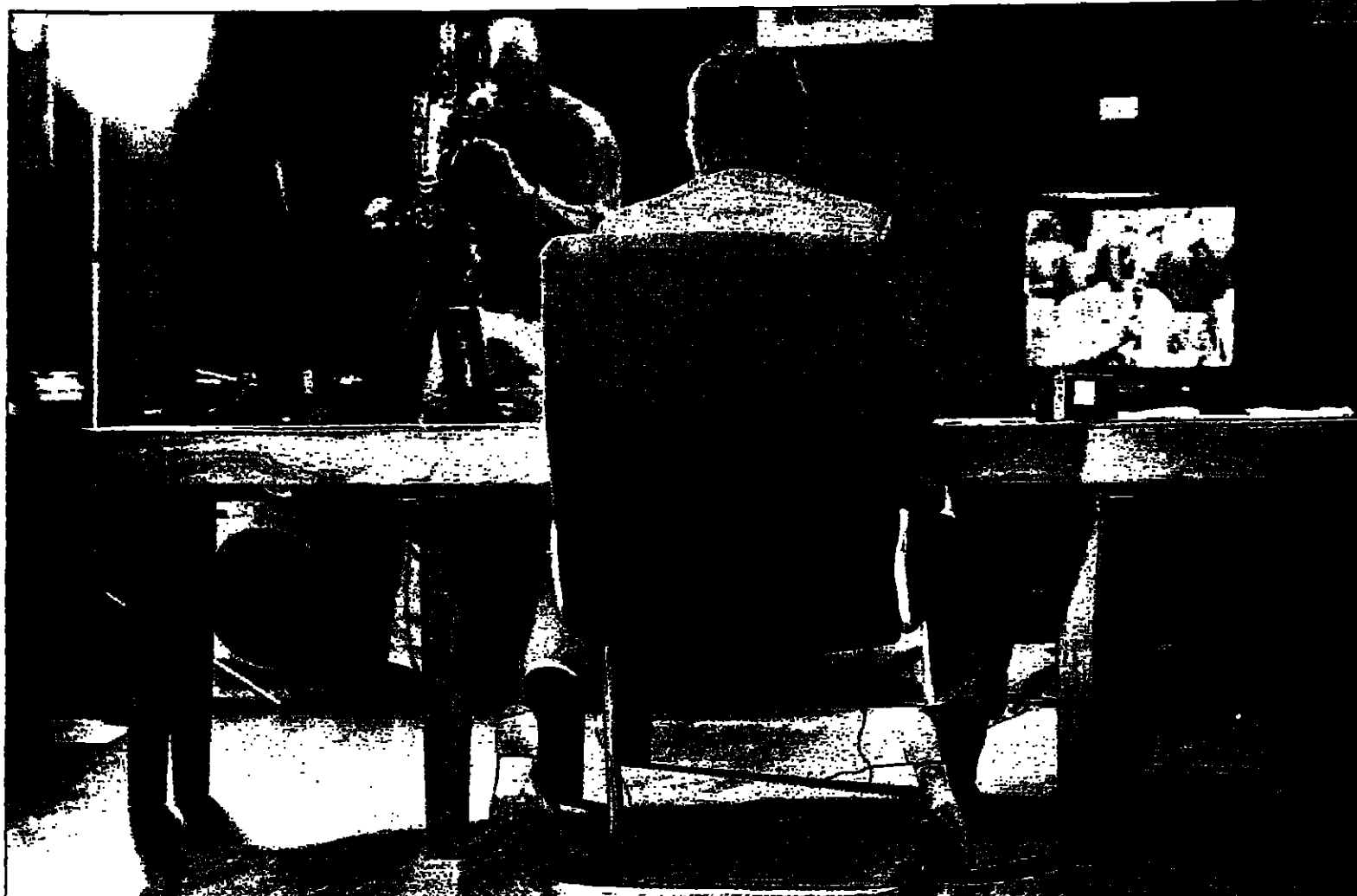
Tony Blair stole a march on John Major by addressing British Olympic athletes in Atlanta via satellite yesterday. The Labour leader told the UK team that sport was a "national asset" and "an investment for the whole country".

The Prime Minister had been invited to take part in the link-up but "failed to commit", according to a spokesman for the firm sponsoring it, Lucent Technologies.

Mr Blair stopped short of claiming Britain would win more medals under a Labour government, and resisted pressure from the British Olympic Association to promise more money for sport. Instead he wished the athletes "the best of luck" and launched a review of how the money the Government spends could be better spent.

"I think we have got to decide from now on that as a country we are going to treat this as a major national priority," he said.

Dick Palmer, the BOA chief, speaking in America, told Mr Blair that British sport was "muddling through" due to too few resources. The rowing gold medalist, Matthew Pinsent, told the Labour leader that it was a "disgrace" for the Olympic team to be sponsored in the way it



Live link: Tony Blair wishes British Olympic athletes luck via satellite as they put their case for better funding for sport

Photograph: David Rose

was, saying it needed to be "funded up to the hilt".

But Mr Blair said: "All these things need to be reviewed urgently, we need to come out with

a proper programme and we have to stop just treating this as something you just parcel off to National Heritage and say we'll forget about it."

Pinsent told him that it was

not just a question of looking after Britain's athletes for the few weeks of the Olympics - it was necessary to look at how lottery funds were spent on sport and how young athletes make the

transition from school through to international level. "It is vital that the people we send have got everything - not just for two weeks - we need funding for 600 people in the team for a year

or two years back," he said. Fencer Fiona McIntosh told Mr Blair that the problem was not just the provision of facilities but lack of good coaching for Britain's youngsters.

After Dunblane: Rejection of weapons ban sparks backlash by massacre victims' families

Fury at Tories' handgun vote

JASON BENNETTO, Crime Correspondent

Pressure grew on the Government yesterday to outlaw handguns, as a storm of protest greeted the decision by an influential group of Tory MPs not to support the banning of pistols and revolvers.

As reported in the *Independent* last Friday, an inquiry by MPs, set up after the Dunblane massacre, is deeply divided, with the majority Conservative members refusing to recommend a Labour amendment to ban handguns.

Their rejection has caused outrage among parents of the children killed and injured in Dunblane.

Labour has also seized on the decision by the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee as evidence of the Conservatives' "kowtowing to an influential gun lobby."

Parents of the 16 children murdered in March said yesterday they hoped Lord Cullen's inquiry into the tragedy, which is due to report in September, would still recommend a ban, and that public pressure would push this through.

Steve Birnie, whose six-year-old son Matthew survived the massacre, said: "People don't want their neighbour to have half a dozen handguns in a cupboard in his home - and not

know anything about it until he breaks down and goes mad with them."

The scale of the anger and dismay expressed yesterday, at the possibility that the 200,000 handguns legally held in Britain would remain in circulation, is certain to influence the Government's thinking in the run-up to a general election.

The six Conservative members of the Home Affairs Select Committee ruled out a ban as "impractical", despite protests from the five Labour MPs who took part in the inquiry.

John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, said: "I'm absolutely staggered that Tory MPs should have voted this way against the banning of guns in homes."

"The public want it. It's common sense. The evidence is overwhelming, and that's why the Labour Party would vote to demand the banning of guns in homes."

Ann Pearson, who helped organise the 700,000-signature Snowdrop Petition against handguns, said: "I just hope and pray Lord Cullen comes down on the side of true justice, and protecting people in this country."

She rejected claims that a ban was impractical, and pointed out that the Hungerford massacre was followed by a ban on some categories of gun.

And Susan Leslie, the teacher representing members of the Professional Association of Teachers at Dunblane primary school, said: "There is a small minority of the population whom this would offend."

She added: "Do we put them first, or the security and well-being of our children?"

John Greenway, one of the Tory MPs on the committee, told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "While we entirely understand why people might want to ban handguns in the light of Dunblane, you have got to sit down and look dispassionately at what that would mean, what the effect would be - and would it in all honesty prevent that kind of incident happening again in the future?"

"We came to the balanced view that it would not."

David Mellor, a former Home Office minister, who supports a ban, said the decision was "profoundly damaging" to the Tory party.

He warned that they were in danger of being outflanked by Labour as the party of law and order.

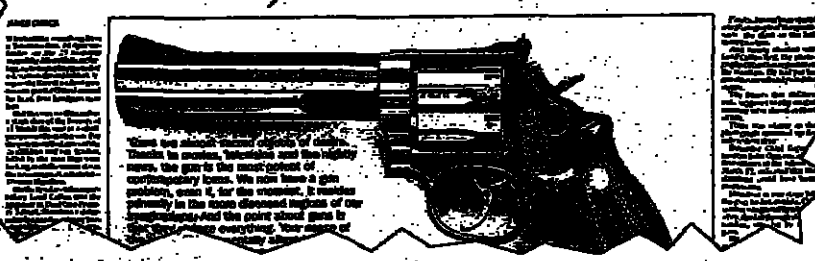
The Government has said it will wait for Lord Cullen's findings before deciding what action to take.

The police have already said they support the banning of most handguns.

THE INDEPENDENT

Dunblane Inquiry told how Hamilton took four minutes and 105 bullets to kill 17

Above all, let us be rid of this



The *Independent's* front page on 30 May, reporting the first day of the Cullen inquiry

Vagrancy to Hungerford

The first controls were introduced in the 1824 Vagrancy Act in the backlash against the large number of people roaming the country with weapons brought back from the Napoleonic wars.

The Act allowed the police to arrest "any person with any gun, pistol, hanger [dagger], cutlass, bludgeon or other offensive weapon... with intent to commit a felonious act".

This was followed by the Night Poaching Acts of 1828 and 1844, the Game Act of 1831, and the Poaching Prevention Act of 1862 which made it an offence to use a firearm to shoot game illegally.

The 1870 Gun Licence Act was created to raise taxes and made it illegal for anyone to use a gun outside their own property without a licence. The first restrictions on the sale of guns came in the Pistol Act 1903, but it was not until the 1920 Firearms Act that the possession of

pistols, revolvers, rifles and ammunition first required a police firearms certificate. Machine guns have been prohibited since 1937, and all shot guns have required certificates since 1967.

The controls were consolidated in the Firearms Act 1968, which provides the basis of the current system. The essence of this is that the police must, before issuing a certificate, be satisfied that the applicant is suitable to possess a firearm or shot gun. In the case of a pistol or revolver, the police must be satisfied that they have a good reason for having the weapon.

However, Bill Tupman, former director of the Police Studies

Centre at Exeter University, believes this is the area most difficult to police. He said: "The problem remains that there is still no procedure to define what is a fit and proper person."

Holders of firearm and shot-gun certificates and firearms dealers are bound to keep their weapons securely and dealers must register with the police.

The Hungerford massacre led to the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988, which banned a large number of the most dangerous weapons such as self-loading rifles and semi-automatic shot guns. It also strengthened the controls on shot guns and the safe keeping of firearms.

Despite all the restrictions, at the end of 1995 there were 409,000 legally held firearms and 1,296,600 shotguns in England and Wales. In Scotland there were 32,000 firearms certificates covering 100,000 weapons and 69,000 shot-gun certificates.

Strikes spread in public sector

Industrial unrest in the public services yesterday spread to the rail network, the health service and JobCentres, as Royal Mail management warned postal workers' leaders that their offer to end the long-running dispute was "final", writes Barrie Clement.

Union leaders declared that rail services run by nine train operating companies faced "major disruption" after workers voted overwhelmingly to strike in two disputes over productivity pay and refreshment breaks.

In the health service, more than 350 NHS trusts and authorities yesterday failed to meet a deadline imposed by the public sector union Unison for topping up a national pay wage deal of 2 per cent.

Unison set in train a process which will end with ballots on industrial action at all NHS employers which refuse to improve on the nationwide settlement.

Meanwhile, Benefits Agency staff in hundreds of offices will begin a 48-hour strike today over fears for their safety when the controversial Jobseekers Allowance is introduced in October.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

A man was jailed for a murder he committed 18 years ago after the teenage victim's family campaigned to have the case brought to trial.

Lynn Siddons, 16, of Derby, was stabbed 43 times and strangled during a canalside walk with her friend Fitzroy Brookes in 1978. Fitzroy, 15 at the time, was cleared of the murder but later accused his stepfather Michael of the killing.

Yesterday, after a six-week trial and nine hours of deliberation, an Old Bailey jury returned a majority 10-2 verdict finding Michael Brookes, 51, guilty of the murder.

The murdered girl's grandmother Flo Siddons, 81, who had spearheaded a campaign through the civil courts and eventually to the criminal courts, said she was delighted with the verdict. "At last after all these years we have justice," she said.

The court had been told how Brookes had "initiated and instigated" the murder. Fitzroy, who was the chief prosecution witness, admitted stabbing the girl half a dozen times but said it was on the orders of his stepfather who provided the fatal strokes and immersed her head in water before dumping the body.

Brookes' solicitor said his client was shocked by the verdict and planned to appeal. PA

The costs of putting out to tender a whole range of civil services functions since 1992 have outweighed the savings in at least a quarter of cases, an efficiency scrutiny published by the Cabinet Office shows.

The programme has damaged staff morale and left departments equally divided over whether quality has improved, stayed the same or got worse as growing parts of the civil service have been subjected to outside competition and in many cases privatised.

But the programme has nonetheless produced net savings of between #240 and #280m for the taxpayer - around 13 to 15 per cent of the #1.8bn worth of service subjected to competition. Government departments are getting better at handling the Competing for Quality programme, the study concludes.

A police officer used a 24-inch long US-style baton to "lash" a man over the head, it was claimed at an inquest. Brian Douglas, 33, a boxing promoter, died five days later with seven skull fractures and "massive irreversible" brain damage, Southwark coroner's court was told.

Michael Francis, said Mr Douglas "slumped" silently to the ground as if he had been knocked unconscious after the attack in Clapham, south-west London, in May last year.

Police officers who arrested Mr Douglas and a friend said they had stopped them because of the way their car was being driven. The jury has been told that despite vomiting in his cell, Mr Douglas, of Balham, south-west London, was not taken to hospital until more than 12 hours after he was injured. He later sank into a coma and died, after being declared brain dead.

The hearing was adjourned until today.

A fossil showing the first evidence of flight in birds has been found by archaeologists. Spain Discovered in Spain, the fossilised animal - the size of a goldfinch - lived in the Cretaceous era, at the same time as the dinosaurs. It is the earliest discovered with an "alula" - a flap of feathers at the front of the wing, which is essential in modern birds for low-speed flight and manoeuvring.

The findings, announced yesterday in the scientific journal *Nature*, indicate that "as early as 115 million years ago, birds had evolved a sophisticated structural system that enabled them to fly at low speeds and to attain high manoeuvrability," said the Spanish researchers who made the discovery.

The new bird, named *Enallavis hoyasi*, offered another surprise - a full belly. "Crustacean remains found inside its belly also provide the oldest direct evidence of feeding habits in birds," said the researchers. Charles Arthur

A strain of the AIDS virus which some scientists say poses a greater risk to heterosexuals than the strain most commonly found in HIV positive gay men, has been identified in the UK.

The Public Health Laboratory Service reported the first case of HIV1 subtype E in May this year, and have now identified 72 people - 60 men and 12 women - who may be infected with the strain. The majority of them contracted subtype E after heterosexual contact in Thailand, or after sex with someone who had been there, according to a report in *New Scientist*.

Subtype E is believed to have arisen in Thailand and was first reported about four years ago as a strain "adapted" for heterosexual transmission, rather than homosexual transmission, or transmission through dirty needles. A team from Harvard School of Public Health in the US last year reported that the strain was more adept at infecting cells lining the vagina and tip of the penis.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said that surveillance of subtype E was underway, and that HIV tests of donated blood "are expected to identify antibodies to all subtypes of HIV1." Liz Hunt

Social services departments are rationing care for the elderly, mentally ill and disabled and charging more for it, a survey of local authorities conducted by Community Care magazine shows.

More than half are applying stricter criteria in deciding who qualifies for help, and nearly all now level charges. Approaching half of social services directors said some people have stopped using services because of the new or higher charges they face. Nicholas Timmins

The National Publishing Group, a consortium half owned by the Electra Investment Trust and half by the merchant bankers Robert Fleming, has been chosen as the preferred bidder for HMSO, the government stationery office business. Ministers plan to complete the sale later this summer. Nicholas Timmins

A man who collected 2,431 protected birds eggs was fined £1,200. Durham City magistrates were told that Robert Crich, 48, of Brandon, could have been fined a maximum of £6,178,000 for the haul. He admitted specimen charges and was fined £600 for one osprey egg and £600 for a peregrine egg, plus £50 costs.

The court was told collection included the eggs of some of Britain's rarest nesting birds such as red-throated diver, osprey, goshawk, peregrine, avocet and dotterel.

A pensioner was cleared of the theft of a bag of sweets in a day-long trial that cost the taxpayer £7,600. It took a jury at the Old Bailey less than an hour to acquit Edward Green, 74, of Bracknell, Berkshire, of the theft of confectionery valued at less than £7 from Woolworth's in Maidenhead. Mr Green admitted walking out of the shop without paying but said his age made him forgetful.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS	
Belgium £180	Italy £14,500
Canada £235	East, America, Africa and India £184,000
Czech Republic £43	East and Australasia £206,700
Denmark £118	France £200
Germany £146	Spain £200
Greece £146	Sweden £200
Japan £146	Switzerland £200
USA £180	USA £180

Ruddles County Riddles.

No. 9. Worth its Weight in Gold

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perfected packaging Ruddles	put it, and James, to the test.	right (or was it the appliance
County in a can to such an	He invested in a reliable pair	of science?) and they
extent that it tastes as	of scales and put 3 special	enjoyed 2 cans each in
marvellous from a can as it	sample cans of Ruddles County	celebration of James' skill
does from any bar run by a	on one side and one identical	(or was it just luck?)
skilled Landford, James Faggles	can of County + 1/2 an lb of	Can you work out what
claimed that a can of County	Krugerrands on the other side.	one of these cans must have
was worth its weight in gold.	Then he challenged James to	weighed?
One day a visiting friend	tell him how much a single can	



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Imran bowled over as Botham and Lamb lose the High Court test

JOJO MOVES

Imran Khan won the most expensive libel case in cricketing history yesterday when he successfully defended himself against accusations that he had labelled former England captain Ian Botham a ball-tamperer and a racist.

Botham said, after the trial at the High Court, that he was "astonished" at the verdict of the case, the costs of which are estimated to be up to £500,000. He and fellow cricketer Allan Lamb had sued Imran, the teetotal, Oxford-educated former Pakistan captain, over an "offensive personal attack" in *India Today* magazine, which they claimed, suggested that they were racist, not properly educated and of inferior social standing.

Botham, alone, sued over a report in the *Sun* which, he alleged, accused him of ball-tampering – something he says he has never done.

Imran, who denied libel, said his words were taken out of context and he was only trying to defend himself against allegations of cheating made against him in a previous newspaper report.

As the jury returned two majority verdicts in his favour, after five hours of deliberation, Imran appeared stunned. His pregnant wife, Jemima, who had accompanied him throughout the two-and-a-half-week trial, appeared to be as surprised as he was, and as she left the court said the result was "amazing".

Cricket's most expensive libel case has ended – with a surprise verdict for both parties

ing", telling her mother: "I'm such a cynic." Outside the court, Imran said he was "overjoyed" by the result and paid tribute to the support of his wife.

"I thank the Almighty, that whatever I've been saying for the past two years, that I've been vindicated, that I never called anyone a racist, under-class or cheat," he said.

Imran believed that the result vindicated Pakistani cricketers who he said had been called cheats, and he added that he hoped the issue of ball-tampering would be laid to rest once and for all.

He also said he was sad that the case had come to court and that he felt "sad" for Botham. Imran, his wife, and her family were said to be celebrating last night.

Imran's solicitor, Howard Cohen, said he was "absolutely delighted" and that Imran would pay only a "very small proportion" of costs which, he said, for Botham and Lamb, were estimated at more than £300,000 for last week alone.

In a brief press conference outside his solicitor's offices



Victorious: Imran Khan and his wife Jemima outside the High Court yesterday

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

shortly after the case ended, Botham expressed astonishment at the result, which had appeared to be heading in Botham's favour last week, when Imran withdrew a plea of justification with regard to the allegations of ball-tampering.

"I'm a little confused as to how it went against us," Botham said.

"If you had been there two-and-a-half weeks then I think it's a conclusion you are entitled to come to and it's one I came to," he added. Botham said he had

fought for his dignity and honesty and said he did not feel the verdict had affected his reputation.

Imran Khan had to withdraw justification and therefore had to admit I was not a cheat which is why I'm finding it con-

fusing. I'm sure other people will find it confusing as well," he added.

On the issue of the costs, Botham said he had not had time to think about the implications, but he added: "Life goes on. I'll just have to do a

couple more road shows to pay for it."

Allan Lamb, who also professed himself "astonished" said: "The jury's got to make their decision and we've got to accept it." Asked his opinion of Imran, he said: "Still the same".



'Astonished': Botham (top) and Lamb (below) expected to win

Male hormone patch is 'no elixir'

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

The hopes of millions of middle-aged British men – and women – were dashed yesterday, as doctors dismissed the idea of a male menopause, and said that testosterone patches were no solution to a mid-life crisis.

GPs fear a deluge of patients demanding the new patches launched today which alleviate the problems of declining testosterone levels, including loss of libido, impotence, fatigue, loss of muscle power, and depression.

The male menopause has been touted as the cause of these symptoms. Many men hoped that testosterone hormone replacement therapy would have the same rejuvenating effect on them as oestrogen patches do on women. But at a conference on the Andropatch yesterday, Dr Ian Banks, a part-time GP, said there was no evidence in men of an equivalent of the female menopause. Healthy males do not have a dramatic drop in testosterone levels in middle-age.

"What we do know about middle age is that it is a time of uncertainty and failing confidence, with an inability to fit the media image of a sexually powerful, competitive, macho male, compounded by the fear of ageing," Dr Banks, a middle-aged man, said. "It is tempting to simply put all this down to a lack of sex hormone." The belief that the patches were "an elixir of life" did a grave disservice to the public – and the health service," he said. The patches will cost the NHS around £45 a month per patient, and tests prior to prescription will cost at least £30.

The Andropatch will benefit between 20,000-30,000 men who suffer from hypogonadism (testosterone deficiency). Dr Richard Foulds, medical director of the manufacturer, SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals, said they wanted to encourage a responsible attitude towards prescribing the patches. However, executives know they have struck a goldmine. The idea of the male menopause has become fixed in the minds of many men who see no reason why they should not receive a testosterone boost.

Leading article, page 15

How cricket was caught out tampering with the evidence

What struck me was how small the place was. Court 13 may have been full of giants like Ian Botham and Imran Khan, and their respective counsel Charles Gray and George Carman, but from the witness box they seemed very small.

Having been subpoenaed by Imran's solicitors, I began by facing the gentle medium-pace of Mr Carman. No rough ride here, though the jury looked as if they'd reached saturation point over cricket balls and the thousand and one ways to tamper with them. Mr Carman was clearly never a

Derek Pringle delivers his verdict on a case for the tea-room

cricketer. Although I'd gone to court prepared to be bamboozled by ancient legal phrases such as *Qui oant dicti nihil excludit* (He who says everything excludes nothing), his use of terms like "baton down the ball" had everyone flummoxed.

As he rested, Mr Gray came on to bowl a hostile spell from the Botham-Lamb end.

Where it not for the potentially huge costs involved, and the markiness of its central tenet – what is and isn't considered cheating – the

whole event could be trivialised and serialised into a soap opera.

Cheating is an emotive word in any sport, particularly in cricket, which is seen in certain quarters as a by-word for fair play. In professional cricket, though, what may be set down in the law has been systematically bent by players for generations. Which is why picking the seam and the use of lip-salve to preserve the ball's condition have long been accepted by both professional players and the umpires

who watch over them – many of the latter former first-class players well-versed in both practices.

What has upset this coterie of accepters has been the intrusion of television and the Victorian-like moralising of sections of the media. In 1992, hysterical levels were reached over alleged malpractices by Pakistan's bowlers in achieving reverse swing, which in the hands of a skilled practitioner can blow away a batting order.

Like picking the seam, the sure-

fire method of achieving reverse swing is a clear breach of Law 42, and yet its novelty has upset the accepted level of the old playing field to such an extent that even the most liberal of professional cricketers would probably consider it cheating – particularly if outside agents such as bottle tops are used to roughen one side of the ball.

Nobody likes to be labelled a cheat. But what should have been sorted out over a cup of tea has gone all the way to High Court 13. A number only the lawyers were certain to find lucky.



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arts news

Lottery cash to sweep museums into 21st century

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

Ministers want greater use of technology to enhance access

Up to £500m of National Lottery money is to be thrown into technology to enhance the accessibility of museums, the Government announced yesterday in its first full review of museum policy since the Thirties.

The money will be made available over the next four years to develop museums and galleries. Following changes in lottery rules, it could be used to put museums on the Internet, Virginia Bottomley, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, said.

The National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and the Natural History Museum, all based physically in London, are also accessible through Internet sites or CD-Roms, and Mrs Bottomley wants to see more use of information technology. The review aims at raising standards in museums and galleries, improving the stewardship of collections and access to them, enhancing museums' educational role and helping them to harness new technology.

"New technology will give greater opportunities to museums and galleries than ever before to look after their collections and make them available to a much wider audience," Mrs Bottomley said.

In order to allow museums to use lottery money for such projects, the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation at the earliest opportunity to give the National Heritage Memorial Fund wider powers to help museums.

The move is a recognition of the increasing sophistication of a public that has come to take for granted the use of technologically enhanced entertainment which makes many British museums and galleries appear woefully old-fashioned.

"This legislation will enable museums to take advantage of

the new technology, not only to manage their collections but to present them in ways that are interesting and enjoyable for visitors. Quite rightly, today's visitors have high expectations and museums must innovate and adapt to satisfy them," Mrs Bottomley warned.

The review also recommends that direct funding of national museums by the Department of National Heritage should continue and that local authorities be encouraged to turn their museums into charitable trusts.

In a related development, Downing Street yesterday announced the appointment of Loyd Grossman, the food critic, to the Museums and Galleries Commission. The presenter of the BBC's television *Masterchef* series chairs his own Campaign for Museums, which he says exists to "re-mind opinion formers that museums are a good thing".

Mr Grossman added yesterday: "I hope to bring the passion and enthusiasm of a lifetime of museum-going to my role as a member of the commission."

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All frills: A dancer at the Royal Opera House, during rehearsals for *Cinderella*. Plans to stage *The Nutcracker* were changed because both the Kirov and ENO companies were due to perform the same ballet this autumn
Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Bodices and breeches top the TV schedules

Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is to form the centrepiece of BBC1's autumn schedule, it was revealed yesterday, as the television trend for adapting 19th century literary classics continued unabated.

The three-part adaptation is to star Tara Fitzgerald, Rupert Graves and Toby Stephens, son of the actress Maggie Smith.

A surprising choice in many ways, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is one of the Brontë sisters' least accessible novels. It is the story of Helen, a beautiful young mother forced to flee her debauched and unfaithful husband, Arthur Huntingdon, to live with her brother, Lawrence.

Charlotte Brontë suggested that the unpleasant husband was based on their dissolute brother Branwell, and after it was published readers considered the novel excessively morbid – a far cry from *Pride and Prejudice*, the recent Jane Austen adaptation.

BBC1's £162m schedule faces tough competition from ITV, which earlier this month attacked the BBC on its own ground by announcing it would screen an adaptation of Austen's *Emma* this autumn by Andrew Davies, who wrote the acclaimed *Pride and Prejudice* for the BBC.

ITV has lined up two other audience-grabbing costume dramas: the continuation of the popular *Poldark* series – without the original stars – and an adaptation of Defoe's rollicking *Moll Flanders*.

It has also confirmed rumours that a fourth episode of *Coronation Street* would go out at 7.30pm on Sundays from the end of November in a bid to bump up Sunday night ratings.

BBC1 meanwhile will offer a

revamped version of *Clive Anderson Talks Back*, the chat show formerly on Channel 4, called *All Talk*, and former *EastEnders* star Letitia Dean in a comedy drama set in the 1950s. *The Hello Girls*, about a group of telephonists.

In another major drama, BBC1 will be telling the story of the Victorian adventurer Cecil Rhodes, starring the ex-*Professionals* actor, Martin Shaw, in an eight-part series which took 10 years to make and



Tara Fitzgerald: 'Wildfell Hall'

used 10,000 South African extras.

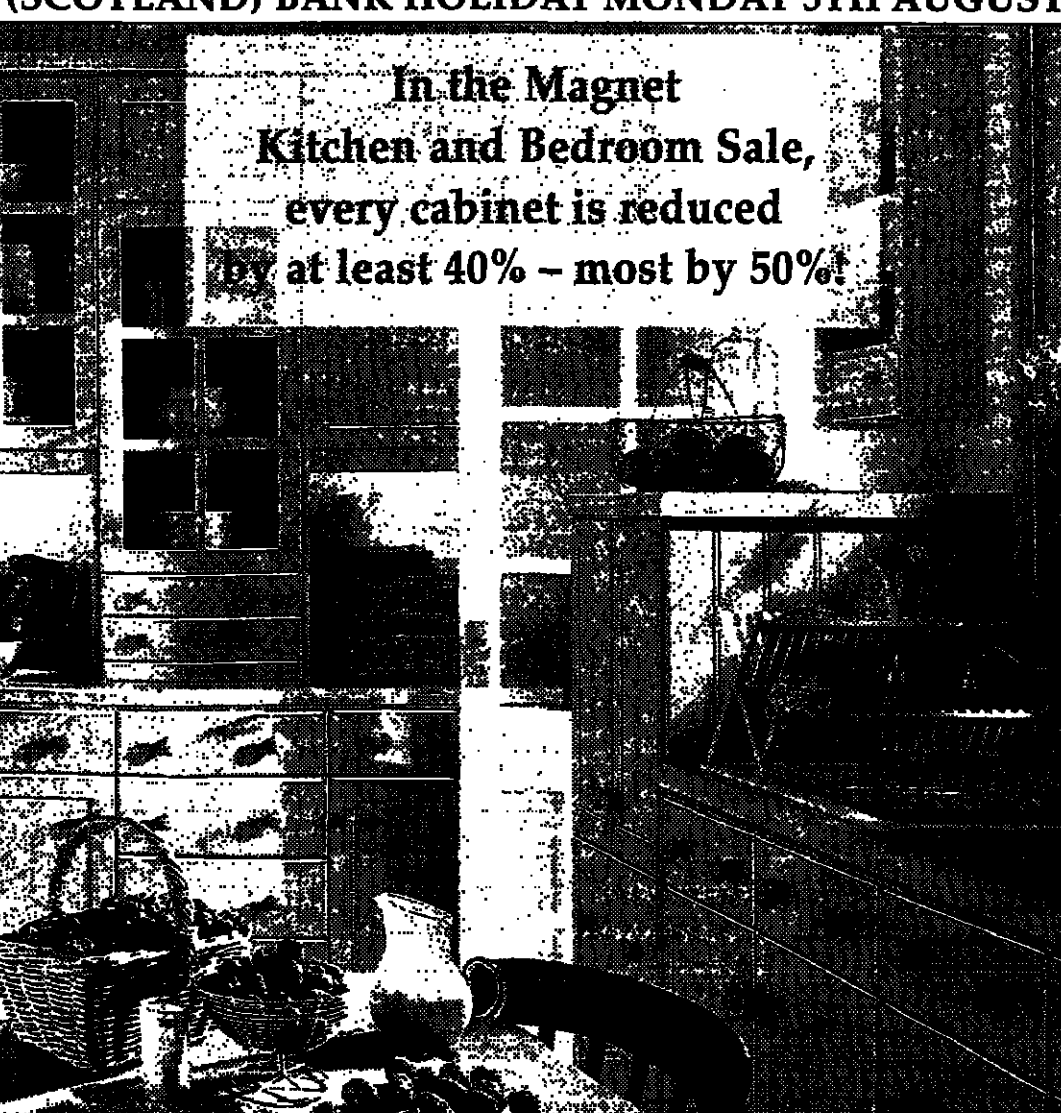
Returning series include *Hetty Wainthropp Investigates*, *Casualty*, *Crocodile Shoes* and *Pie in the Sky*. There will be a one-off *Absolutely Fabulous* special and a reworking of an old favourite in *The Legacy of Reginald Perrin*.

Forthcoming documentaries include the story of Britain's secret "collusion" with France and Israel in *The Suez Crisis* to mark the 40th anniversary of the conflict, and film premieres include *Al Pacino in Carillo's Way*, Sharon Stone in *Silver*, and Michael Douglas in *Falling Down*.

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Giving a new chance to an old forest friend

KATE WATSON-SMYTH

A national scheme to save one of Britain's most endangered species – the red squirrel – from extinction was launched in London yesterday.

At the turn of the century, the creature was so widespread that it was viewed as a pest, but since the introduction of the grey squirrel, its numbers have declined so dramatically that it faces extinction within 20 years.

Dr Tom Tew, senior mammalogist with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, said: "They are declining before our eyes, and if we are going to tip the balance back in favour of red squirrels, we must conserve the few we have left until their habitat can be changed to suit them."

Only about 160,000 red squirrels survive, in just a few areas of the country, compared with about 2.5 million greys. There are colonies in forests in Scotland and parts of Wales, as well as a few outposts in Cumbria and Northumbria. Small populations still survive near Thetford in Norfolk, Cannock Chase in Staffordshire and on the Isle of Wight, where the grey has failed to establish itself. The grey is so much stronger, that within 15 years of arriving in an area, the red squirrels have usually completely disappeared.

Now, the JNCC has produced a plan for foresters,



Afterlife: A taxidermist at work. The 'grey menace' means all red squirrels could be museum pieces in 20 years. Photograph: Will Walker/North News

landowners and local groups to encourage the preservation of the red squirrel. This includes the planting of coniferous trees (its natural habitat) and thinning out some deciduous

forests. Grey squirrels are to be discouraged from foraging in red territory by depriving them of their footholds in the forests. Red squirrels love hazelnuts, but because the greys can digest

them before they mature, the reds eventually starve to death. In some areas, where the threat from the greys is extreme, the population will be controlled, but there are no

plans to exterminate the breed. Dr Tew said: "There are two time-scales here. The first is to preserve the red squirrels we have, and the second is to provide them with the correct

environment to thrive, away from the grey squirrels. "This is going to take us decades, but if we don't do it we will lose the red squirrel forever."

Britain's other destructive imports

Grey squirrels were brought into Britain from North America in 1875 by a Cheshire landowner who wanted an exotic addition to his estate. Since then, several other exotic breeds have been brought into the country, only to wreak havoc among our indigenous animals.

THE AMERICAN MINK was brought over from America at the turn of the century and bred for its fur. Several escaped after the Second World War and they can now be found all over the country. It is semi-aquatic and lives along the banks of rivers, where it eats water voles and moorhens.

THE MUNTJAC DEER was introduced from China in the early 1900s. The size of a small dog, it is thought to have escaped from the Duke of Bedford's estate at Woburn Abbey. They eat large quantities of bluebells, which are in decline, and will often deprive the native roe deer of food.

THE COYPU was also imported for its fur, but when the fur industry collapsed, many farmers simply released them into the wild. The coypu, a South American rodent, has big yellow teeth and resembles an aggressive beaver. It was exterminated in the late 1980s but only after it had caused severe damage to crops in East Anglia.

THE AMERICAN BULLFROG was probably brought over by enthusiastic animal lovers looking for an exotic pet. However, it grows to about eight inches in size and is then released by the horrified owner. Once out in the wild it feasts on our indigenous frogs.

THE AMERICAN CRAYFISH was introduced as an alternative to British lobster but it brought disease with it. Those that have escaped from fish farms are spreading a type of plague among the Signal crayfish.

THE NEW ZEALAND PLATYFORM has been a source of grief to gardeners for some years. Believed to have been brought over by mistake in the soil of imported plants, it has proceeded to munch its way through large quantities of earthworms.

First, shoot three rodents ...

For those who would like to take advantage of the huge population, here is a recipe taken from *Shoot and Cook*, by Old Henry.

GREY SQUIRREL WITH PRUNES

Ingredients: 3 squirrels; 2/3 tablespoons of butter; 2 onions; 12 dried prunes; 3 tablespoons of wine vinegar; a pinch of thyme; 1/2 teaspoon of flour; salt and pepper.

Skin, clean and joint the squirrels and leave them to soak in cold water for 30 minutes. Brown the joints in a large pan and then set aside. Put the onions and butter into the pan and lightly fry. When lightly browned put the squirrel into a casserole with the onions and the fat and add enough water to cover the meat. Add the vinegar and salt and pepper to taste. Cook for about one hour, until the meat is tender, then add the prunes, reduce the heat and simmer for about 45 minutes.

Next, make a roux with the stock, blend and add to the casserole and leave to thicken.

Serve with potatoes.

Papers cleared of contempt in Knights trial

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

Pre-trial reporting of a fight involving Geoff Knights, the boyfriend of *EastEnders* actress Gillian Taylforth, did not break the contempt laws – despite the sensational halting of his subsequent criminal trial because coverage in the tabloids had been excessive.

The surprise ruling from the High Court yesterday was seen as giving the go ahead to trial by media. But in answer to charges brought by the Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, under the 1981 Contempt of Court Act, Lord Justice Schiemann and Mr Justice Smedley insisted it was quite possible for a judge to stop a criminal trial because of prejudice caused by the totality of press coverage but for no one individual publication to be guilty of contempt.

Sir Nicholas had asked the court to find the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Star*, *The Sun* and the now-defunct *Today* after Judge Roger Sanders stopped the trial of Knights on charges of wounding Martin Davies, the soap star's chauffeur, with intent. The judge ruled that pre-trial coverage had been "unlawful, misleading, scandalous and malicious", and "so unfair, outrageous and oppressive" that a fair trial was impossible.

It was thought to have been the first time adverse publicity alone had led a judge to halt a trial. The Act outlaws publication of material that would

cause a "substantial risk of serious prejudice" to a trial and bites from the moment of arrest.

Between them the papers detailed Knights' previous convictions for violence, interviewed witnesses and gave exaggerated accounts of the alleged crime. After the arrest of Mr Knights in April 1995 "what one would have expected to be treated as *sub judice* became an opportunity for certain newspaper editors to take it upon themselves to try Mr Knights in their columns," Judge Sanders said.

One of the flaws of the 1981 Act is that it ignores the cumulative effect of publicity. Each report has to be examined individually to see whether it could have influenced a juror. An additional feature of the case was that Knights "colourful past" had already been the subject of massive publicity.

The judges said it was "difficult to see how any one of the publications... created any greater risk of serious prejudice than that which had already been created".

Philip Havers, for the Attorney General, said the press "may well conclude that they have very considerable freedom to publish what they choose at the time of arrest". Leave to appeal was refused and Sir Nicholas will now have to apply directly to the Law Lords.

The exercise has so far cost the taxpayer around £250,000. The papers' costs were ordered to be paid out of central funds.

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news



Davis: Behaved 'unwisely'

Oflot chief's job at risk after MPs attack serious errors

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

Peter Davis, director-general of Oflot, the National Lottery regulator, was heavily criticised by an all-party group of MPs yesterday for taking free flights from one of the members of the Camelot consortium, the game's operator.

Mr Davis was on holiday and was unavailable for comment on the damning report from the powerful Commons Public Accounts Committee

(PAC). National Heritage, the department Mr Davis answers to, said it would study the report and respond in due course.

While the report was not unexpected - Mr Davis was roasted by MPs when he appeared before them last December - the severity of the criticism, high by the exacting standards of the PAC and unprecedented for an industry watchdog, raises questions about Mr Davis's future.

To highlight his discomfiture, the committee not only

said it was "unwise" of him to accept the free flights, and that he had made "serious errors of judgment", they were also "unimpressed" by his reasoning that the trips were made only after the lottery licence had been awarded by him to Camelot.

The report also fuelled the continuing row between Oflot and Richard Branson, the Virgin chief, over the rejection of his bid to run the draw, by highlighting questions over G-Tech, the lottery specialist and member of the Camelot group. "The

committee were concerned at the information they had which raised doubts about the fitness of G-Tech... This included suggestions of undesirable business practices by G-Tech in obtaining lottery contracts in the United States, including alleged corrupt payments in California, Kentucky and New Jersey made to various persons, including a state Senator."

It was vital, the committee said, that Mr Davis investigate any allegations of impropriety about the Lottery. They wel-

comed his decision to hold an internal inquiry into the claim by Mr Branson that Guy Snowden, chief operating officer of G-Tech had tried to bribe him. Last week, this inquiry cleared Mr Snowden of the charge. However, Mr Branson refused to give evidence. The bribery charge will now be settled in the courts when Mr Snowden's action for libel against Mr Branson is heard.

By then, Mr Davis may have lost his job. The committee said he was "unwise" to use a

corporate aircraft owned by G-Tech - which has a 22 per cent stake in Camelot - on a fact-finding mission around the US in October 1994. Mr Davis's reasoning that it was cheaper for the taxpayer cut little ice.

The committee also criticised his decision to stay at the New York home of Carl Menzies, head of a US investment firm with a 25 per cent holding in G-Tech. The MPs said they recognised that the friendship between the two men's wives pre-dated the creation of the

Lottery. But they said: "We regard it as of vital importance that the director-general should be seen by the public to be completely impartial."

The MPs also said they were "unimpressed" by Mr Davis's argument that he had accepted the free flights only after he had announced his decision to award the licence to Camelot. "In our view, the director-general's decisions to use G-Tech corporate aircraft represented serious errors of judgement on his part," the report said.

Housing: The countryside is under pressure

Towns to grow in green fields

CHARLIE BAIN

Fields will disappear under bricks and concrete if land is to be found for the millions of homes needed for a growing number of households, a major study revealed yesterday.

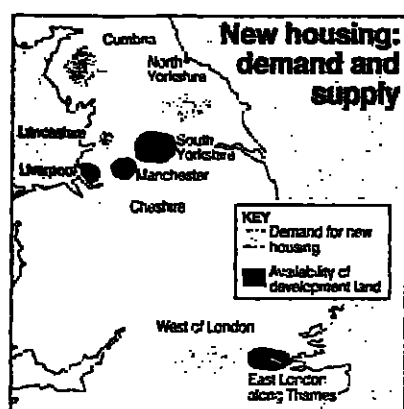
The Government estimates that almost 4.5 million new homes are needed over the next 20 years. But an investigation into where they may be built reveals a mismatch between demand and supply of land - and this could have a dramatic effect on the landscape of southern England.

As people continue to leave the cities, planners say that "large-scale use" of undeveloped land is "inevitable".

Their study, produced by the Town and Country Planning Association and the Joseph Rowntree Trust, warns that while the Government policy of using former industrial sites for development means that half of all housing is now built on recycled or "brownfield" land, this will decline in the years ahead.

Professor Peter Hall, of University College, London, who co-edited the report, said that the pressure to move out of cities "threatens current policies which encourage sustainable, environmentally sensitive development".

Demand for land in the south east is strongest west of London, but most former industrial land



Building for the future: Most new homes are needed in Cumbria, Cheshire, rural Lancashire, North Yorkshire and west of London, where there is a shortage of land for development

lies to the east. In the north west, land is available in Manchester and Liverpool but most new housing is needed in Cheshire, Cumbria and rural Lancashire. In Yorkshire and Humberside demand is in the north - but most brownfield sites are in South Yorkshire.

Solutions to finding enough land, says the report, include spreading into protected green-belt countryside, building along rail corridors, filling vacant sites within urban areas and creating new villages and towns.

Tony Burton, a senior planner with the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) said: "Commitment to urban renewal should be the starting point in the debate. It is significant that the idea of new towns has returned, af-

ter nearly a decade of intense opposition exemplified by anger over plans to build over Foxley Wood in Berkshire.

Now new towns are on the drawing-board for Hampshire, Kent, Berkshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, East Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Gloucestershire and Devon, plus "bolt-on" settlements next to Bristol, Swindon, Peterborough, Dorchester, Dartford and Glasgow.

In January a £500m "bolt-on" new town complete with 5,500 homes, to be built next to Peterborough, was announced by the Hanson Trust. In Hampshire, Eagle Star have drawn up plans to build an 8,000-home new town at Micheldever, on 1,000 acres of arable land beside the main railway line from Southampton to Waterloo.



Heels: Muf (left, with fur) and Tri, of Hewlye Farm in Sussex, watch the sheepdog trials at Sheep '96 in Malvern yesterday Photograph: Rob Stratton

Sheepdog for sale: travels on farm bike and follows horse

RICHARD SMITH

It was a nerve-racking time for the flat-capped farmers waving crooks and calling the tune with whistles and shouts of "come by", as a select band of 45 working sheepdogs with names like Moss and Floss were put through their paces yesterday during the big sheepdog auction at Sheep '96.

While the dogs worked with gusto,

more than 1,000 potential buyers scrutinised their every move in the main arena at Malvern, near Worcester.

The six Brecknock Hill Cheviots which the dogs were rounding up looked decidedly frisky. But auctioneer Mike Tompkinson remained cool as one dog chased a sheep out of the arena and then a keen young bitch bit a ewe in the

flock. "The bitch is only being friendly," he told the crowd.

Talk among insiders was of how one Welsh farmer had just sold a top sheepdog for £5,000 in a private sale. But Aubrey Hughes, 63, was content after his 18-month-old sheepdog Sam was knocked down to a Derbyshire farmer for £1,110. Farmers see it as money well spent. "It would probably take four or five men to do a

sheepdog's work," said Harcourt Lloyd, 55, from Trefeglwys, in Powys, whose dog Joe was third in the Welsh Open Championships this year.

The sale catalogue paid tribute to all the dogs, including four-year-old Fan, (sire: Spot, dam: Trim): "Outstanding farm bitch. Travels on farm bike and follows horse... will move anything. Good breeder, should come into season soon. Fan-trained?"

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Railways are back. Over the past few years people and governments the world over have realised they are the only environmentally friendly means of mass transport for passengers and freight. Congestion, combined with the social and environmental cost which is the result of unrestricted use of motor vehicles, have led to a return to what was decreed in the post-war decades as an outmoded form of transport, doomed to be superseded by the all-conquering motor.

Immense sums are being poured into railways and organisations which have often dwindled into bloated bureaucracies are being reshaped on more businesslike lines.

Over the next few weeks the *Independent* will be reflecting this renaissance of rail the world over in a series of articles. They will not be mere accounts of Great (or Lesser) railway journeys.

They will be snapshots of every aspect of rail travel, from the economic to the architectural, reflecting the sheer excitement engendered by every aspect of a rail journey as well

Every country gets the trains that it deserves

as the whole world of railways, trains, stations – and railwaymen.

We hope these reflections will provide a picture of the way railways remain an essential part of social and economic life of countries throughout the world.

We also hope they will not only fascinate our readers as much as they do the *Independent* staff but also provoke them to think about what we should be doing to encourage the new era of rail travel.

The series is based on a simple observation: that today, as in the past, railway systems represent a country's capacity to organise its transport systems and thus, by implication other less obvious public functions, in a sane and economic manner.

It has often been said newspapers represent a nation talking to itself. Similarly, railways represent a society, a community, in motion. Their re-emergence is an echo of the way that

during the 19th century they created the modern world.

Nations such as Belgium, Italy and Canada could not have existed without them. Empires steamed along the lines built by the conquerors. They defined time, they defied distance, they liberated man's imagination.

The industrial revolution depended on them. They alone could transport the masses of food required to feed growing cities. The railway between London and Wiltshire was known as the Milky Way and the fishermen of far-off Cornwall timed their arrivals in harbour to coincide with the train timetable.

Mass movement of people, as emigrants and later as tourists, relied on them. The very stations were rightly called "temples of steam" and remain some of the finest monuments to the Victorian age.

Some of those themes find their echoes today. Splendid stations, like Nicholas Grim-



shaw's masterpiece at Waterloo, are being built for the first time in half a century; and the association of railways with imperialism is finding a new echo in railways being built by Iran to strengthen its links with the Central Asian republics and steer them towards thinking of the Gulf, rather than Moscow, as their natural link with the

A community in motion, a nation on the move; **Nicholas Faith**, introducing our summer series, says railways are undergoing a worldwide renaissance

Yet they are recognisably the same means of transport first developed to carry coal between the mines and rivers and the sea in north-east England in the 1820s.

The new ultra-fast trains, running at up to 200mph through France – and Spain and Germany and Japan and Italy – still rely on steel wheels running on steel rails which are still set, as in George Stephenson's day, 4ft 8½in (1.435m) apart.

So, of course, is Eurostar, the train service which, steadily but surely, is drawing London and south-east England into a closer relationship with the Continent than with far-off, and equally foreign, Scotland and thus doing more for our links with Europe than a thousand speeches.

In *The Old Patagonian Express*, Paul Theroux summed up the feeling that today, as in the past, railways provided an accurate reflection of the moral, cultural, social, economic state of a particular

country. "The seedy, distressed country has seedy, distressed trains; the proud, efficient nation is similarly reflected in its rolling stock, as Japan is."

"There is hope in India because the trains are considered vastly more important than the donkey wagons some Indians drive."

By these standards most countries throughout the world are striving towards the better society represented by a superior railway system and prepared to pay heavily for the benefits.

They are building tunnels – between Denmark and Sweden as well as under the Channel – they are constructing high-speed lines, not only throughout Western Europe, but also in Korea – and between Moscow and St Petersburg. They can even be adapted to take masses of lorries off the roads – in the United States, road-haulage companies are transferring much of their long-haul traffic on to the railways,

which had been pronounced near dead until the late 1970s, but which have been miraculously rejuvenated by freedom from government regulation.

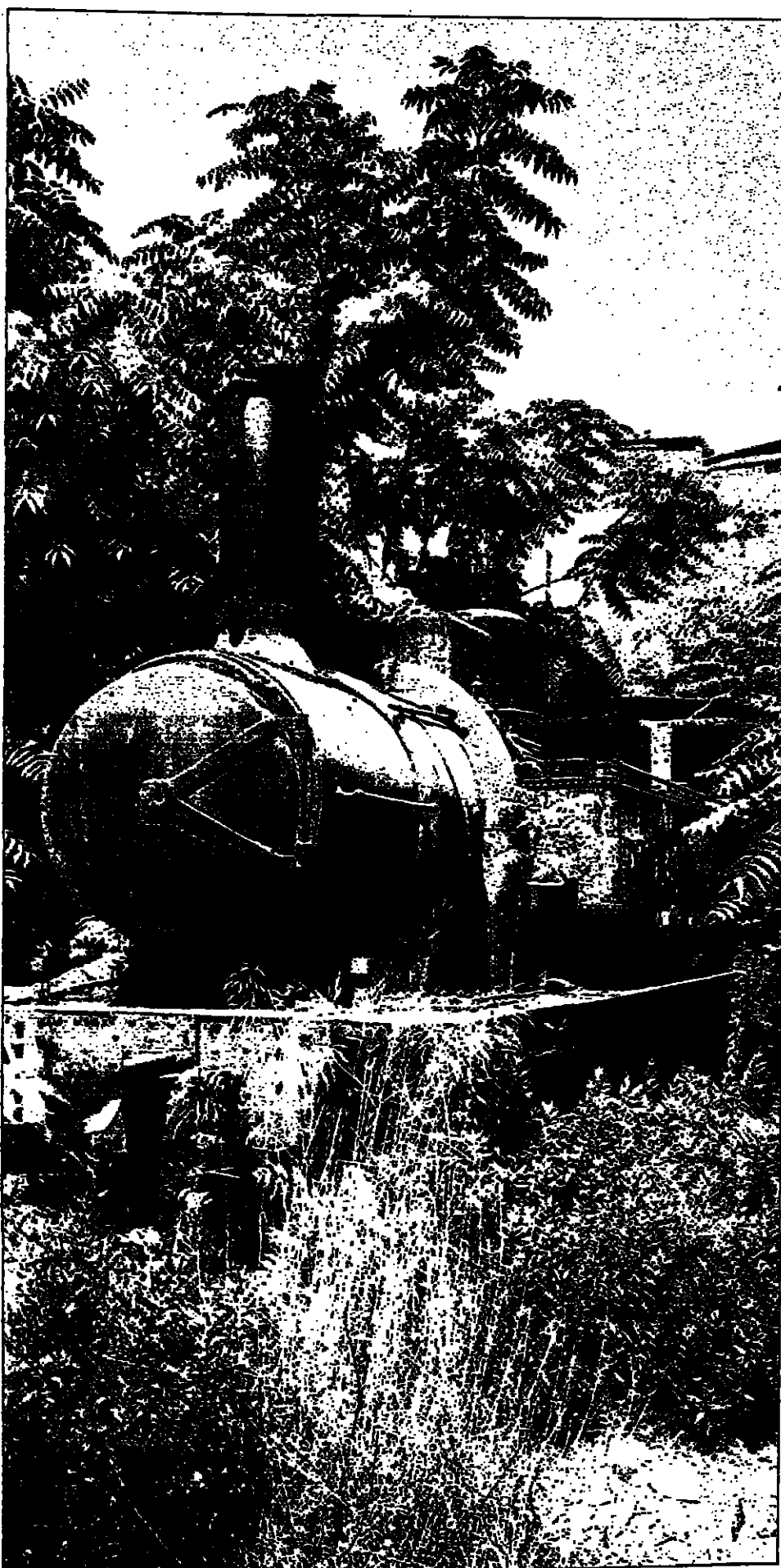
And, finally, how does Britain fare in these comparisons? Bluntly, as a country which is slipping inexorably into the Third World.

Britain, a crowded island eminently suited to rail travel, is the only country apart from the United States unable to contemplate abolishing the subsidies given to road transport in the form of company-car allowances, ludicrously low taxation of heavy lorries, and relatively cheap petrol.

Privatisation, this government's magic cure-all, is simply a pathetic attempt to evade society's responsibilities towards its transport systems, combined with a fragmentation which makes the simplest and most obvious investment an intolerably prolonged affair – and ensures that the rails themselves, unlike the roads, let alone the rails in other countries, actually have to make a profit.

Nicholas Faith

Lebanon dreams of peaceful connections



Rack and ruin: A Swiss locomotive that once hauled Kaiser Wilhelm's train over the Lebanon mountains rusts amid war wreckage at Beirut central station. Photograph: Robert Fisk

Beirut — Just opposite Abdullah Chehab's desk is a sheet of Cellophane-covered files that may constitute one of the biggest – and, sadly, the emptiest – dreams in railway history. As Mr Chehab opens page after page of maps, a brand-new railway network for post-war Lebanon runs across the paper.

It snakes, green and red, through the ancient Crusader port of Byblos, follows the permanent way laid down by the Royal Engineers and Australian army in 1941, curls inland through the Hizbollah slums of south Beirut, then streaks south to the port of Tyre, scarcely 12 miles from the Israeli border. The two-track, 120-kph electric railway would cost £329m.

Reality, however, is just a platform away. For Mr Chehab – who rejoices in the title of Director-General of Lebanese State Railways – does not have a single working train to his name. The closest locomotives to his office stand only a hundred yards from his door, rust-covered and weed-enshrined, wheels strangled in bushes, the relic of the Ottoman Empire's 19th-century Levantine railway system, pock-marked with 20th-century bullet holes.

The great Swiss Winterthur rack-and-pinion locos carried the Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm across the mountains to the Roman ruins of Baalbek in 1898, freighted Turkish troops towards Syria during the First World War and starred in numerous Lebanese films until brought low by the outbreak of civil war in 1975.

That is the gentlest way of describing the fate of the Lebanese railway system. Across the country, the great green-painted steam locos of the French mandate lie rusting on broken sidings, their funnels and cabs and tenders the haunt of birds and rats, their tracks littered with the wreckage of flaking carriages once purchased from the railways of the British Raj. At Rayak – the twin terminus with Baghdad for the original Orient Express – the Syrian army have camped amid the ancient steamers, their gun emplacements sprouting amid the steam-pipes and pistons, a bunch of anti-aircraft guns dug in near the engine sheds.

Perhaps armies are psychologically drawn towards the railways that carried their ancestors to and from the wars of the early 20th century. In Tripoli, the old PLO front line, now a pile of tattered grey sandbags, runs in front of the locomotive sheds while Syrian special forces troops have installed themselves behind the grass-covered turntables. Still dripping the last oil poured

into their machinery more than two decades ago, the big 4-6-2s rot in sidings close to the 15th-century Tower of the Lions. One of these locos has received a direct hit from an artillery shell that smashed through the cab and ricocheted into a decaying goods wagon. All are peppered with bullet holes.

Widely believed to be of French manufacture, it took one of the world's leading enthusiasts of Levantine railways – a Manchester rabbi – to identify them correctly as German. Originally pulling the big expresses of the pre-First World War Reichsbahn, they were ceded to France as war reparations under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and transferred by France to its newly mandated territory in Lebanon and Syria, acquired under the League of Nations at the same time Britain took control of Palestine and Transjordan. For more than half a century, they pulled passenger expresses between Tripoli and the Syrian city of Homs, only to end their days when Lebanon broke apart in 1976. Thus did German locomotives of the Kaiser's Reich fall victim to the bullets and shells of Lebanese Christian militias, Syria and the PLO.

Mr Chehab wants to restore the Rayak railroad and reopen the line to Homs, re-linking Tripoli with the Syrian city at the same time. He is toying with the idea of restoring a rack-and-pinion track over the mountains but agrees that a new permanent way and new tunnels would be needed for the system. In the last years of the civil war, much of the track was torn up. The Christian Phalange militia ripped up the rails of the old British army ammunition line along the coast south of Beirut to use the rail-bed as a military supply route for lorry-mounted mortars. Further south, holiday chalets have been built over the track.

In 1982, the Israelis bombed down the last rack-and-pinion railway bridge east of Dahr al-Baidar after failing to hit the main mountain highway. They tried – and failed – to destroy the stout, French-built tunnel at Mdeirj in which the Syrian army had stored ammunition. But the railways of Lebanon had other, less militant enemies. When I took the last working train from Beirut to Byblos five years ago – a roaring Polish diesel pulling two tiny, bullet-splattered wooden carriages – the driver had to stop 18 times because cars had been parked on the tracks. In the southern suburbs, entire eight-storey apartment blocks – illegally built but none the less permanent, stand on top of the permanent way.

Mr Chehab is unimpressed. "We own the line and we're not paying compensation," he says firmly.

But his resolution falters when you ask about costs. "The project for the new railway must be passed by parliament and the cabinet. It will be ... built, operated and transport provided by a single company. But it depends a great deal on the 'peace process.' A dodgy prospect, I suggest, especially after Benjamin Netanyahu's election victory in Israel. 'I am not a politician,' Mr Chehab replies carefully. "But I would say that the entire project depends to-

tally on the 'peace process.'"

And then, of course, it all becomes clear. The new main line to Tyre is supposed to continue further south, through the ruins of the Roman forum at Tyre, down the bed of the old track to the border at Naqoura to link up with the old British mandate line north of Nahariya. Beirut's railway line is being projected on the assumption it will go all the way to Israel, on to Tel Aviv, even to Cairo.

And there the dreams have to end. The Lebanese government still pays its 150 railway staff for work on a track that has not seen a train in two decades

but Mr Chehab is being bled off to work on the bureaucracy of this year's Lebanese elections.

I ask Mr Chehab if a steam train will ever run again in Lebanon. Slowly, looking at his desk, he shakes his head. "No, they'll not run again. I don't want to get rid of them. We will keep them for now. I had a thought of maybe a Lebanese railway museum. Unless there is someone else interested." British, I suggest? And Mr Chehab's face lights up.

Robert Fisk

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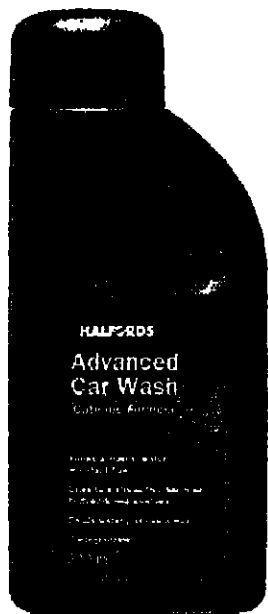
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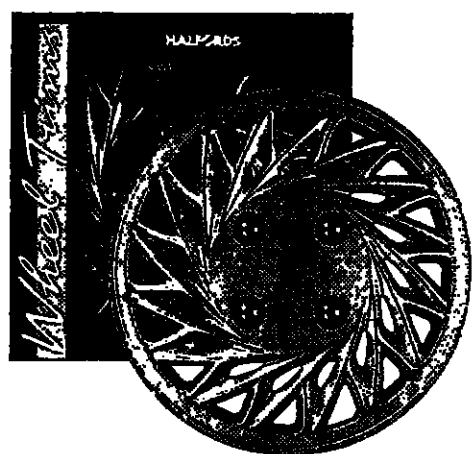


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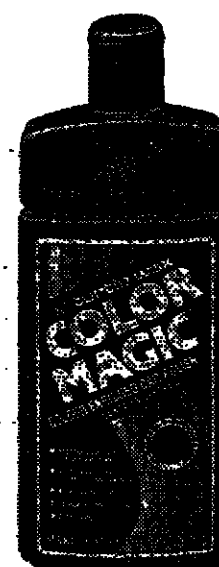
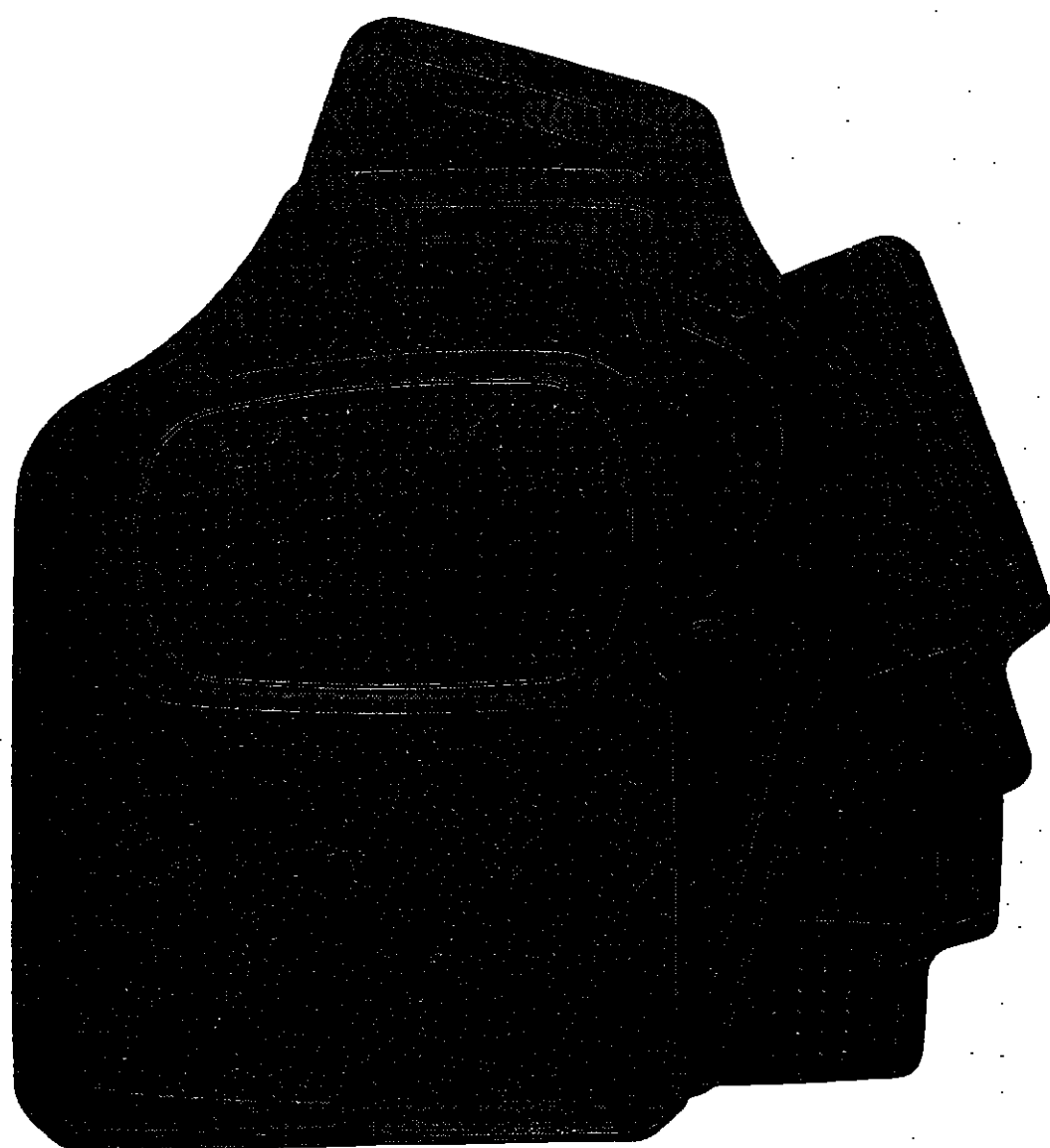
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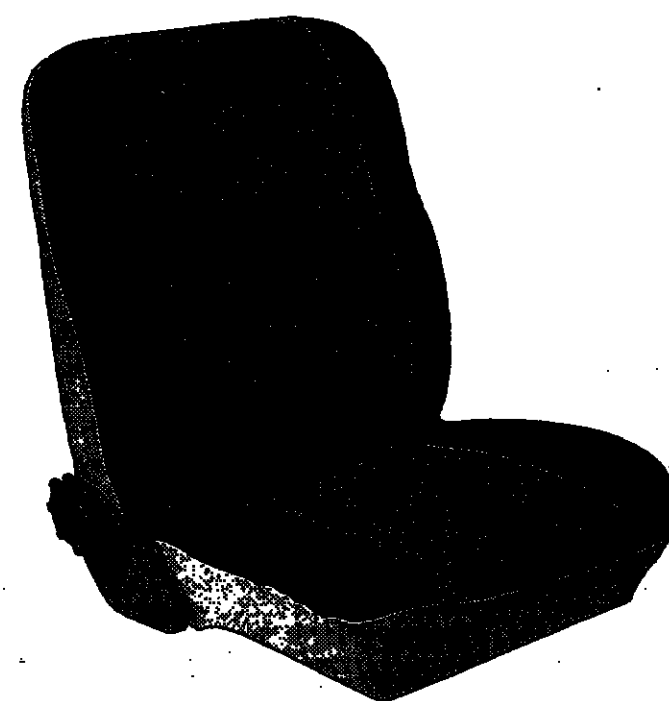
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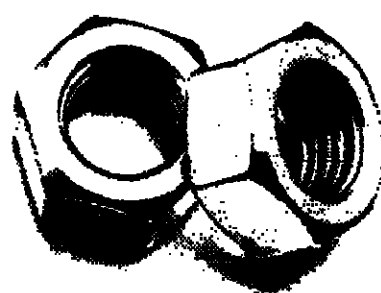
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Atlanta 'hero' denies placing bomb

PHIL DAVISON
Atlanta

For several days, he was trumpeted as the all-American hero of the Olympics. Richard Jewell, a pudgy 17-stone security guard and former policeman, was the man who said he spotted the suspicious knapsack that turned out to be a bomb in Atlanta's crowded Centennial Park last Saturday. "Had it not been for Richard, there could have been dozens of fatalities instead of two," his colleagues said.

Yesterday, FBI agents questioned Mr Jewell for the second day and searched the Atlanta apartment where he lives with his mother, looking for evidence that might show he planted the bomb himself.

"We are treating him as a suspect," an FBI agent said, although Mr Jewell was not under detention.

He could be seen yesterday, sitting on a stairwell outside the apartment with FBI agents while others conducted a detailed search inside.

FBI sources said evidence against Mr Jewell, described by former colleagues as having been "a gung-ho cop with a history of over-zealous policing", was so far only circumstantial. The case against the bomber would hinge on evidence still being studied in FBI laboratories in Washington. That includes fragments of the pipe bomb, a green knapsack it was left in and the nearby pay-phone from which a warning call was made about 20 minutes before the bomb went off.

Mr Jewell, who had gone from talk show to talk show in the first three days after the bomb, appearing as a shy, retiring hero, denied involvement. "Did you do it?" A reporter shouted as he arrived at local FBI offices for questioning. "No, sir, I did not do this," he replied. FBI special agent David Tubbs told a crowd of reporters outside the flat: "This search does not constitute evidence of guilt. [It] is part of an ongoing investigative process. Mr Jewell has been

fully co-operative. He has not been charged with any crime."

The news that the would-be hero may have been the bomber stunned Atlanta, still trying to come to terms with the blast that ripped through Centennial Park, the bustling social point of the Olympics, during a concert at 1.30am last Saturday.

Many Atlantans, Olympic officials and athletes expressed relief that a suspect had been found. Many were shocked to realise that a single person may have been responsible for an in-

cident which came close to halting the Games. That the bomber may have been a security guard assigned to protect Centennial Park added to the disbelief.

The FBI came under criticism yesterday for apparently leaking the news that Mr Jewell was a suspect before having enough evidence to detain or charge him.

First Lady Hillary Clinton visited the site of the bomb yesterday and saw what has become a kind of shrine, with hundreds of thousands of visitors leaving flowers, their national flags, and

goodwill messages. It was at this site where Mr Jewell gave one of his "shy hero" interviews. When the park was reopened to the public on Tuesday morning, he was interviewed live by Katie Couric of NBC. "You did the right thing," Ms Couric told him as thousands of people cheered.

"If my 15 minutes of fame was finding this package and saving some lives, that will be fine with me," he said in another interview.

Robert Fisk's Essay, page 16

Muslim plea over Mostar

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

Bosnia's Muslim-led government demanded international action against Croatia yesterday to overcome a crisis in the divided city of Mostar that is threatening Bosnia's first post-war elections next month.

Bosnia's Prime Minister, Hasan Muratovic, told a meeting of Islamic countries in Geneva: "This is the last moment for the international community to direct its activity towards the Republic of Croatia to bring about the implementation of what is signed [in the Dayton peace agreement]."

Croat political leaders in Mostar, supported by President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, have refused to accept the results of municipal elections in June that gave a narrow victory to their Muslim rivals. The Croats have boycotted what was supposed to be a newly united city council, thereby perpetuating Mostar's division into Croat and Muslim sectors.

International mediators say that, if the Croat boycott is allowed to continue, it will discredit the all-Bosnian elections on 14 September. Even without the Croat boycott, the elections are likely to be flawed because of Bosnian Serb opposition to fundamental elements of the Dayton agreement.

Mr Muratovic appealed to the outside world to freeze economic relations with Croatia as punishment for its refusal to make the Bosnian Croats dissolve their self-styled state of Herzeg-Bosnia. The Dayton agreement stipulated Herzeg-Bosnia's abolition, and Bosnian Muslims say the Croats' non-compliance threatens to destroy the Muslim-Croat federation, designed as a cornerstone of the peace deal.

The European Union, which has administered Mostar since 1994, intends to pull out next Sunday unless the Bosnian Croats agree to join the city council. But EU officials and mediators such as Michael Steiner, the deputy international High Representative for Bosnia, doubt that the Bosnian Croats will budge unless produced by Mr Tudjman.

French heroes from wrong side of tracks

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

With a national record of 32 Olympic medals to their name – so far – you would have thought that the French would be dancing around the Arc de Triomphe, or at least cracking open a bottle or two of champagne in the Bois de Boulogne.

With a population almost identical to that of Britain, France has won more than three times as many medals, 12 of them gold, and lies third in the medals table.

At yesterday's cabinet meeting, President Chirac joked that he was awarding the sports minister, Guy Drut, himself a former Olympic champion, a metaphorical gold medal in recognition of the French team's success at Atlanta. The congratulations from on high are lavish. Mr Chirac sent a long message to Marie-Jo Pérec when she retained her 400m championship, applauding the example she had set to young athletes, and quoting from a post of her native Guadeloupe. The Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, appended a handwritten note to his message, saying: "Well done! I embrace you."

The media, in amazed ecstasy at the French performance, are promoting the idea that the medal-winners represent the "better face" of French youth. Much has been made of the fact that many of the medal-winners, especially in the early events like fencing and judo, were hither-

to "unknowns" from immigrant families, from modest backgrounds, or from the further reaches of the French empire.

"Where did all these stars come from?" asked the pro-government daily *Figaro* in surprise, before drawing an optimistic lesson for social and racial integration.

The victory of Djamel Bouras in the judo was hailed as the first time a *beur*, a non-white Frenchman of north African origin, had won an Olympic gold. His call home, and his joyous family gathered on the sofa in their council house were held up as proof that France's housing estates – portrayed last year as the cesspits of the nation, seething with ethnic unrest – were not such a failure after all.

Two other gold medalists, a woman judo winner and a cyclist, with previous Olympic disappointments to their name, were treated as paragons of the wholesome, country life. The message was that the real heart and soul of the country is to be found in the much-ridiculed "France profonde".

For the French government, the nation's success in Atlanta has only one downside: a nagging worry about how much it could cost. Olympic victors receive generous rewards from the government, up to 250,000 francs – more than £30,000 – for a gold medal.

Otherwise, the nation's success at Atlanta should be a godsend. The President and the Prime Minister have spent the

best part of a year blaming a nebulous "feel-bad" factor for the economy's failure to grow, and for the persistence of high unemployment. What better tonic for the national psyche than a tally of Olympic medals?

Unfortunately, little of this seems to be filtering through. France is on holiday. And when the French go on holiday they have better things to do than watch television – which include doing the walking, cycling, white-water kayaking, riding etc, themselves.

But even if the French were not – physically and psychologically – on holiday, the "feel-good" benefits of the Olympics might still be less than the government would hope. "Can Olympic medals really be any sort of consolation," wrote a reader from Aix-en-Provence in a letter to a national newspaper, "to a country that is in such a parlous state?" And he drew a surprising analogy with Grand Prix racing.

Which would you rather be, he asked: Volkswagen, the market leader, that has never taken part; Renault, which has won all the championships but is now withdrawing from a promising market; or Ferrari, the legendary champion fallen on hard times? "I would prefer French society to be more like Volkswagen than Renault," he said, unpatriotically.

A good many more than 32 Olympic medals will be needed to lift this particular Frenchman out of his gloom.



Returning heroes: Djamel Bouras (left) whose first-time victory – a gold in the judo – has brought optimism to France over its 'cesspit' council estates, and Marie-Jo Pérec (right), who retained her 400-metre gold



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Township station stampede kills 16

MARY BRAID
Johannesburg

For the people of the sprawling Tembisa township yesterday started like any other day - tough, before dawn and with the usual indignity.

Those lucky enough to have jobs in this isolated shanty settlement north-east of Johannesburg leave home before 4am to queue for trains to the city. Yesterday the usual huge numbers placed the usual impossible pressure on a straining public transport system. By 6am the desperate scramble to board the first trains, and arrive at work on time, had begun.

Fifteen minutes later 16 people were dead or dying and more than 60 others lay crushed and injured after a stampede.

Guards from a private security company, with orders to get tough with ticket dodgers, apparently set upon commuters with electric cattle prods in a barbaric exercise in crowd control.

Local people said the "shock sticks" were a recent innovation. When they failed one young guard reportedly shot into the

air, adding to the panic. Yesterday President Nelson Mandela described the mayhem that followed as a "national disaster".

There was ugly violence, reminiscent of the days when townships were war zones for young blacks in confrontation with the state. Gangs of youths petrol-bombed the ticket station. Police replied with rubber bullets. Soon all that remained among the charred wood and twisted metal was the pathetically inadequate single turnstile through which thousands cram each day.

As word of the tragedy spread thousands gathered on the station platform but some, trapped on a bridge above the line, had fallen onto the rails. Relatives were prevented by police from seeing the bodies but some discovered their loss from a pile of shoes and belongings discarded in the crush.

Most of the dead were found on the station platform but some, trapped on a bridge above the line, had fallen onto the rails. Relatives were prevented by police from seeing the bodies but some discovered their loss from a pile of shoes and belongings discarded in the crush.

In the rioting that followed, journalists and police officers were stoned and their vehicles vandalised. "We're angry," shouted one young man. "They can put out the fire but we will be back to pull the ticket office down."

"These guys get two weeks training and then they are let loose to use shock sticks and guns on our people," said KP, 25, a rescue and emergency worker. "They know nothing about crowd control and they panicked... This company is new and the guards heavy-handed. The rail company employs private guards to save money; our lives are no one's concern. These sticks are supposed to touch people for just a few seconds but these men hold them on for longer than that."

Other eyewitnesses claimed that groups of security guards had held commuters down and assaulted them with the sticks. A spokesman for Metrorail said that the use of cattle prods was not confirmed but hospital staff claim some injuries - including two comas - suggest electrocution.

The resurfacing of township violence took many by surprise. But community anger reached beyond the loss of 16 lives. People complained bitterly about general conditions in Tembisa, which is home to tens of thousands. Once, apartheid condemned them to live here; now poverty and unemployment has them trapped.

President Mandela promised yesterday that the cause of the tragedy would be established and those responsible identified. "The safety of commuters must be given the highest priority and the government will take urgent steps, necessary to ensure such a disaster never occurs again," he said. Local African National Congress officials said an investigation should concentrate on the "heavy handedness and unnecessary force" used by security guards.

It is a measure of township poverty that local police chief Sandile Msenyana concentrated not on the dead but on the circumstances of those left behind. Most of those who died were breadwinners.



Police come under attack in the violence provoked by the security guards' assault on commuters. Photograph: AP

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Palestinian human rights groups called on Yasser Arafat to investigate the case of a West Bank Palestinian, who was declared brain dead this week after being detained without trial by the Palestinian security forces for seven months.

Human rights activists reported after visiting Mahmoud Jumail, 26, that he had shown signs of savage beating. Mr Jumail was arrested last December on suspicion of belonging to the Fatah Eagles, a dissident faction of Mr Arafat's movement. *Eric Silver - Jerusalem*

African leaders agreed to impose sanctions on Burundi after a Tutsi military coup but took no action on a report calling for military intervention. Burundi's military ousted Hutu President Sylvestre Ntibunganya last week and installed Pierre Buyoya as ruler.

The decision on sanctions was taken by the presidents of Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, the prime ministers of Ethiopia and Zaire and the foreign minister of Cameroon, the OAU chairman. *Reuter - Arusha*

Lavatorial jokes flushed around Paris yesterday following the revelation that the Justice Minister, Jacques Toubon, had had a private lavatory and shower installed next to his office at a cost to the French taxpayer of 300,000 francs (£45,000). The ministry stressed the distance the minister had previously had to walk to reach the nearest loo. *Mary Dejevsky - Paris*

Teenage Filipino maid Sarah Balabagan, whose conviction for murder in the United Arab Emirates sparked outrage, was freed from jail and is on her way home. She was released because of her good behaviour in prison, a statement said. Balabagan was sentenced to a prison term, 100 lashes and then deportation, for stabbing to death her Arab employer. *Reuter - Dubai*

Pravda has suspended publication because of a feud between the editor and the Greek owners. The once-mighty organ of the Soviet Communist Party has seen its circulation and revenues shrivel. The owners, brothers Christos and Theodoros Giannikos, closed the paper last week after being denied entry to the building. *AP - Moscow*

Zimbabwe's only gay group won the right to exhibit at Africa's biggest book fair yesterday after the country's High Court overruled a government ban. Judge Wilson Sandura said the ban, announced on the eve of Harare's international fair, was invalid. *AP - Harare*

A sick kangaroo terrorized an elderly couple when it refused to let them out of their suburban home after hopping out of nearby forest. An animal welfare officer shot it dead after it wouldn't budge from their porch. Pat Eaton, a member of a local wildlife group, said: "It was only looking for a place to die." *AP - Sydney*

Have Western countries cheated the Jews out of their inheritance? A 64-page questionnaire in Section Two Cover Story

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Indonesia: The armed forces crack down on dissidents and lay blame for the weekend's unrest on a threat to the New Order

Generals fear 'latent danger' of communism

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Jakarta

The action taken by the People's Democratic Party is very clear," said Lt-Gen Syarwan Hamid. "They want to overthrow the existing government and form their own new government. History can be repeated. It happened in 1948 and happened in 1965. But Indonesians born after that time do not realise the danger of communism, what we call the latent danger."

The spectre of communist insurgency in south-east Asia, an increasingly remote threat over the last few years is alive and well in the minds of Indonesia's generals. Four days after pro-democracy demonstrators rioted and burned buildings in Jakarta, the Indonesian armed forces (Abri) yesterday blamed the disturbances on revolutionary forces of the "old order" who want to overthrow the New Order. Soldiers on the street have been ordered to shoot troublemakers on sight, and at least three activists have been arrested or called in for questioning, in what appears to be a general crackdown on peaceful dissidents.

To diplomats and non-government observers events had until recently seemed fairly straightforward. An increasing number of Indonesians are tired of the authoritarian 30-year regime of President Suharto. The frustrations came into focus last month when Megawati Sukarnoputri, the popular leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), one of just two opposition parties tolerated by the government, was peremptorily ousted in favour of a more compliant candidate. Supporters of Mrs Megawati occupied the PDI headquarters and when they were violently evicted last Saturday morning, popular anger

overlaid in riots which left at least four dead, hundreds injured or arrested, and a dozen buildings in central Jakarta vandalised.

Since the weekend, however, the Suharto government, and particularly the powerful Abri, have attempted to place blame for the unrest everywhere but at their own front door. At first, the official line was that the dispute over Mrs Megawati's leadership was an internal matter for the PDI. When 10,000 people took to the streets over the weekend, this became a difficult line to argue. Yesterday, Abri came up with a new scapegoat — a small and relatively obscure organisation called the People's Democratic Party (PRD).

The PRD was founded this month, and its platform, so far as it has developed one, appears mild. At a rare news conference yesterday, Lt-Gen Hamid, Abri's chief of socio-political affairs, read extracts from a document allegedly published by the PRD. It speaks of social democracy and of establishing several political parties, that "actively involve and lead mass movements to achieve democratic society in Indonesia."

"We want change, and we want protest," said Lt-Gen Hamid. "But these aims do not agree with the values we follow in Indonesia. This organisation is similar to the former communist party, part of the old order which wants to overthrow the New Order." "It's the classic tactic — conjure up this communist threat, and use it as an excuse for a crackdown," said one diplomat who was present at the press conference. "That document they produced was cooked up by the military: they force them here, on the premises." On Tuesday Lt-Gen Hamid appeared on national television

presenting a bizarre diagram illustrating links between the PRD, Mrs Megawati's PDI, and foreign organisations including Amnesty International and the Australian Labor Party. It also named several individual activists, and Amnesty later issued a statement expressing "serious concern that all these activists are at risk of arrest or intimidation."

Accusations of communist sympathies are a serious business in Indonesia. After an alleged left-wing coup attempt in 1965, some half a million people died in anti-communist pogroms, and the maximum penalty for "subversion" is death. In the eyes of the military at least, the taint of communism transcends the generations: top of the government's current wanted list is Budiman Sudjatmiko, the chairman of the PRD; among the complaints against him, Lt-Gen Hamid cited the fact that his father was an active member of the communist party.



Policemen standing guard outside the PDI headquarters, raided last weekend. Three died and 54 were injured in the riots that followed. Photograph: Enny Nuraheni/Reuters

Union leader under arrest

Richard Lloyd Parry speaks to a human rights activist in custody

Jakarta — "This is Muchtar here," said the voice on the telephone at 12.40am. "I won't be able to keep our arrangement tomorrow. Not long after you left my house, some men came round and arrested me. They brought me to the Attorney General's office... I don't know why I have been arrested: they won't tell me yet."

Four hours earlier, I had been sitting in Muchtar Pakpahan's house in a Jakarta suburb, making plans for interviews. As Indonesia's leading independent trade union leader, Mr Pakpahan has contacts with many of the country's proliferating human rights groups and non-governmental organisations. Yesterday, he was to have introduced me to several people who claim to have first-hand knowledge of what so far is just a persistent rumour: that, during their raid on the Democratic Party's offices last Saturday, the Indonesian armed forces killed unarmed demonstrators.

Why was Mr Pakpahan arrested? The warrant issued by the Attorney General's office says that he is being questioned about the subversive activities of Budiman Sudjatmiko, leader of the People's Democratic Party (PRD), which is accused

by the armed forces of plotting the overthrow of the government. Mr Pakpahan himself has faced similar charges: last October, the army's chief of general staff named him, along with two other Indonesian intellectuals, as a communist. "I'm a nationalist and I believe in Pancasila [the Indonesian 'national philosophy'] and the 1945 Constitution," he said on Tuesday night. "I am not a communist. I love my country, but I believe in change."

Mr Pakpahan has been incarcerated before. Last year he served nine months in prison for allegedly inciting a riot in the city of Medan in 1994 — a charge he has always denied. In the current atmosphere in Jakarta, where mere disagreement with the ruling regime is being painted as subversion, he is an obvious target.

Jakarta is thick with paranoia and conspiracy theories, and it is still unclear whether Mr Pakpahan's arrest is just the start of a more general crackdown. "This has been going on so long that I don't care any more what happens to me," he said, when I asked him if he feared for his future. "But there are other people involved, and I have to care about them."

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ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
Princess Alexandra attends the Golden Jubilee
Stewards Show at Woburn Horse Fields, Cambs.
Dorothy, Duffield and Galloway.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment
honours the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards
Park; 1st Battalion Irish Guards honours the
Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.15am.
Band provided by the Welsh Guards.

Publication of the LAW REPORTS
resumes at the beginning of the
current legal term, on 1 October.

Sportsmen give us a good run for our money

Why all the hand wringing? Suddenly half the nation seems to be convinced first that the Olympics is boring and second, that Britain is in terminal, lamentable sporting decline. Commentators are muttering that the Games have been uninspiring this year. And everyone else is moaning about our paltry medal performance. John Major has proposed a new Sports Academy to solve the problem. Meanwhile, Tony Blair has called for an urgent review to improve our future Olympic performance.

Yet both complaints are nonsense. The Games are as great as ever, and British sporting prowess is as respectable as ever. If we want to be brilliant, rather than just respectable, we should shove our hands in our pockets for the extra cash to match other countries' sports investment. But if the public (understandably) can find better things to do with its money, we should all stop whingeing and just enjoy the Games instead.

So Linford didn't get his gold in the 100m. So Sally dropped out of the hurdles. So we didn't see a single British face on the judo podium this year. So what? The Olympic Games are a brilliant spectacle, regardless of the fate of our British competitors.

Consider the incredible twists and tumbles of the gymnasts. Korbut and Comaneci, eat your heart out. Today's

gymnasts leap higher and spin faster than yesterday's heroes ever did. Think of the drama and brute strength of the weight-lifting. The Russian Andrei Chermerkin won the gold medal by lifting an astonishing, record-breaking 260kg. Carl Lewis leapt 8.5m to win his ninth Olympic gold medal. And Charles Austin defied gravity, soaring over 2.39m in the high jump.

If we are disappointed with the Games, it can only be because we set too much store by the performance of a few athletes swathed in the Union Jack. We would presumably have condemned Euro 96 as a boring waste of time and money had England been knocked out in the first round.

But we shouldn't get so depressed about British sport. With our medal tally just staggering into double figures, we have admittedly performed worse than in previous years. But we shouldn't overreact. Some of our best performers this year were carrying injuries; Gunnell, Holmes, Jackson, Obree. It's a shame, but it happens.

You can't judge the state of British sport on the basis of one Olympics. Our worst performance this century took place in St Louis in the US in 1904. We won no gold medals at all, and only one silver, and one bronze. Pathetic huh? Yet only four years later in London, we won a spectacular 56 gold medals, 50 silver and 39 bronze. It was our best performance of the century (although

it did set the world complaining about the bias of British judges).

Half a century on, in Helsinki 1952 – the performance that Atlanta 1996 has been compared to – Britain won only one gold medal, and only 11 medals in total. Yet four years later in Melbourne we picked up six gold medals – something we haven't managed to duplicate since then.

So, it is perfectly possible for the British team to exhibit widely different performances from one Olympics to the next, as generations of athletes emerge and then age. The difference between our Atlanta performance and

our successes during the Eighties is rather small in comparison.

Of course we could do better. We could aspire to more than the five golds we picked up in Moscow, Los Angeles, Seoul and Barcelona. Australia has a population less than half the size of Britain's, yet it won nine gold medals in 1992, and looks set to do as well in Atlanta. But we will need money, not hand wringing, to emulate their success.

Supporting Olympic athletes is an expensive business. They need money to live on while they train full-time, specialist coaches, expert medical support, and proper facilities. Paul Palmer, one

of Britain's few silver medalists this year, still relies on his parents for his keep. Young sports men and women have trouble making ends meet.

The Australians established centres of sporting excellence – top-class academies – to support their sports women and men. They have been raking in the millions ever since. The French have invested heavily in sport – and they have 13 gold medals to show for it.

If the politicians really think it's important for Britain to do much better in the Olympics, they could follow a similar route here. Alternatively, they could shut up and leave well alone. We get the sports we want and pay for. For example, football has plenty of money to train its youngsters and transfer its stars because the public are prepared to pay to watch it, either in the stadium or in their sitting rooms.

In the US, popular support for track events has generated sporting scholarships at private universities and colleges across the country. Even here, established stars of athletics such as Christie and Gunnell can pick up plenty of cash in appearance fees and sponsorship so they can pay for their own top-class training. But the sports that struggle for funds are those which attract little attention in Britain outside the Olympic weeks; they can't raise much money from sponsorship, spectators or television deals. If the public don't have the enthusiasm to support these athletes

directly, it isn't clear that they should get much taxpayers' money either.

New money for elite sports will have to come from somewhere; perhaps from higher taxes, cuts in sports facilities for the public, or lottery money that could have been spent on charities. These are serious sacrifices for the sake of two weeks of feeling good about ourselves every four years. Might we be happier enjoying our occasional Olympic successes, and spending our own money on sport for all instead?

No cure for the seven-year itch

It's official. Testosterone patches won't cure a male mid-life crisis. Oestrogen patches – also known as HRT – help many women sail through and past the menopause unencumbered by the mood swings, exhaustion and ill-health that lack of oestrogen can cause.

It isn't so simple for middle-aged men. Lack of testosterone is no excuse for those who leave their families for young bimboes, panic about their career failures, and wallow in morbid self-pity. Many abandoned wives never believed it for a moment. Their absconding husbands, as they have always known, are suffering (if that is the word) from too much testosterone, not too little.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No clear case for a single currency

Sir: Gavyn Davies's excellent piece on EMU ("What would life have been like inside EMU?", 29 July) deserves a careful and detailed response. He mentions at the outset that his exercise is subject to many caveats but does not return to them at the end.

In my view there is no clear case either way that tells us whether to join a single currency or not. There are factors on both sides to which one can attach probabilities and come out whichever way one chooses but the exercise is fraught with many judgements. In Mr Davies's case the calculations that he makes are backward looking but they are also partial. Thus while he is correct that if everything else had remained the same and a Wael-type fine had been in operation the UK could have paid as much as £30bn, by the same token the effect of lower interest rates on debt servicing and indeed on lower debt, as interest costs are reduced, needs to be set alongside the £30bn.

A lower interest rate of about 3 to 4 per cent on a debt of, say, around £200bn as of 1988 for about four years is not to be sniffed at. So if he has to quantify one he has to do the other as well.

The single currency issue is bedevilled because each side states its own case. The need is to list the advantages and disadvantages of both options clearly setting out the issues over which we can differ both in terms of likely impact and the probability of the impact occurring and then study the range of answers with probability attached before a conclusion can be arrived at. This would be a rational way of proceeding.

Thus we can balance the gains from lower interest rates along with the likelihood that the Euro will be a strong currency and interest rates will indeed be lower, as against the costs of giving up the interest rate weapon and meeting the costs of higher regional unemployment with inadequate transfer payments. We can balance the freedom to set our own interest rates and exchange rates outside with the likelihood that in the past devaluation will only yield temporary gains and interest rates will be higher, especially on long-dated debt due to the UK's reputation for fiscal profligacy.

Is it too much to hope that even now there is time to set up a group, non-political but expert, say in the Institute of Fiscal Studies to get some sense on this question?

Professor The Lord MEGHNAD DESAI
House of Lords
London SW1

Sir: Andreas Whittam Smith disagrees with the conclusion of my book *In With the Euro, Out With the Pound* ("We would soon repent a hasty union" 29 July). Since EMU began with the ERM in 1979, and the Euro is due to come in in 1999, 20 years can hardly be called "hasty".

Mr Whittam Smith uses the metaphor of a car with two drivers to condemn the separation of monetary and fiscal policy. Yet this is what we have now with the duo of Chancellor of the Exchequer running fiscal policy and Governor of the Bank of England having a say in monetary policy. Were the Bank of England to be completely independent, as even some Eurosceptics want, the separation would be complete. Yet this is widely acknowledged to be the best



'All is not lost, they gave us a gold for whingeing'

way to keep inflation down and economic growth up. A European Central Bank is likely to be more independent, and to run a better monetary policy, than any national central bank.

Gavyn Davies (29 July) argues that, had we been in EMU in 1989, the recession would have been dampened; but then, he says, the inability to devalue would "have greatly prolonged the recession, and slowed the recovery". The experience of France suggests that economic growth would have been more stable, and slightly higher on average over the first six years of the 1990s.

Stable growth is better than volatile growth even if the two average the same. Mr Davies also claims that today's base rates would be 3.5 to 4 per cent (I agree), "and the consumer would no doubt be embarking on a vibrant boom". A government seeking re-election should then surely be seeking to opt in to the Euro as soon as possible.

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
London N6

Turkey needs to be more open

Sir: Taking a swipe at politicians is a favourite occupation of a certain type of journalist. Instead, Tony Barber should take a look at the information about Turkey which comes from non-politicians. The US State Department, the UN Rapporteur on Torture, the UN Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, the Writers in Prison Committee of International

PEN, the Turkish Human Rights Association, and Article XIX present the kind of picture Mr Barber ascribes to the "politicians".

Turkey has the longest entry of any country in the six-monthly case list of the Writers in Prison Committee, and the longest entry in the report of the UN Rapporteur on Torture.

The Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, M Bacre Waly Ndiaye, an African jurist, reports that he "continues to be extremely concerned about violations of the right to life in the south-eastern provinces of Turkey". He complains that no progress has been made since 1992 on his request for an invitation to visit Turkey.

If Mr Barber wants Europe to treat Turkey as a friend and equal partner, he should persuade the Turks to adopt a policy of greater transparency. If they have nothing to hide, not only could they invite M Ndiaye, but also they could lift the ban on Amnesty International and myself entering the country. They could invite the International Red Cross to provide humanitarian services under the Geneva Conventions in the conflict in the south-east, as they have been offering to do for 12 years, and they could invite the OSCE to help solve the conflict, as they are doing everywhere else in the region.

Lord AVEBURY
Chairman, Parliamentary Human Rights Group
House of Lords
London SW1

Bacteria and the beginning of life

Sir: Charles Arthur's article, "A comet full of soup" (29 July), refers to ideas that we ourselves have expounded over many years. The article gives the impression that Mayo Greenberg was the first to suggest that life arose through the introduction of organic material from comets, rather than in a purely earthbound "primordial soup", whereas one of us already considered an extension of the primordial soup to include the entire solar nebula in *Frontiers of Astronomy* in 1955, long before Professor Greenberg had expressed any opinions on this matter. The evolution of our own ideas on these matters is traced in our most recent book *Our Place in the Cosmos* (Orion, 1996).

Recent developments in astronomy have shown that light absorption properties of cosmic dust are strikingly similar to those of bacteria and spores – as indeed we have argued for nearly two decades. The organic matter in space resembles the stuff of life, and the problem then is to understand how such material is produced. The choice is whether the material is generated biologically, by means of biological replication in suitable sites such as comets, or whether it is produced non-biologically in a way that somehow mimics the living process. We have always thought that the biological option is preferable to invoking a process which is essentially untestable.

Professor Greenberg is quoted as saying that we are mistaken in considering this particular option because "Bacteria couldn't survive in space. Ultraviolet would destroy them... the idea of interstellar 'spores' is... nonsensical". Such strongly emotive words surely cannot be justified. Bacterial spores in space are most easily protected from UV radiation because they would inevitably acquire thin coatings of protective carbonaceous material (suntan lotion).

The humbling lesson of microbiology over the past decade has been to show how exceedingly sturdy bacterial systems really are, and how they can survive under the most extreme conditions imaginable. Some species eg *micrococcus radiodurans* are known to survive radiation doses equivalent to what would occur in interstellar clouds over millions of years, and of course bacteria in the interiors of comets could survive for indefinite lengths of time.

Our original ideas as described in *Lifefield* (1978) relating to the need to import life molecules from space is now adopted pretty well without dissent. But the more powerful and radical concept of life coming in the form of fully fledged bacteria is resisted for reasons that are more to do with sociology than science. Professor Greenberg and other scientists in the field who are clamouring for priority over the weaker of the two options that we discussed in *Lifefield* are lagging nearly two decades behind.

Professor Sir FRED HOYLE
Professor N C WICKRAMASINGHE
Cardiff

Embryos are not commodities

Sir: I read with interest your leading article, "Frozen embryos: the race for a new ethical code" (24 July). I would suggest that an embryo is not "a couple's potential for children" but a child with potential.

Every one of us began life as a single cell newly created when sperm fertilised egg at conception. At this point, a unique individual has inherited characteristics from both parents. Their genes have already determined the baby's hair colour, eye colour, height and so on, and its sex. If this isn't the start of human life, what is?

It is not only Roman Catholics who believe in the sanctity of life. The plight of the "abandoned" embryos is a clear violation of the 1948 Declaration of Geneva: "I will have the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception..."

I was pleased that you mentioned that very few implantations of frozen embryos are successful. Eighty per cent of couples who enter IVF programmes end with no child. What effect must this have on the couples for whom treatment proves unsuccessful? I would suggest that the reason the parents of so many embryos have "abandoned" them is because of the emotional trauma they must have suffered.

On a positive note, I am glad that the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority plan to ban payment to donors. I hope it stems from the realisation that the embryos are not commodities.

Mr KAREN A FOWLES
York

The joke is on the English

Sir: "I had no idea" says Miles Kingston, "that there was such a thing as a Welsh Academy" ("One way to unite the Welsh: insult them", 30 July), and it seems that he is just as ignorant about the condition of Welsh culture.

He would be ashamed, I think, to write so scornfully about any other country whose language he does not understand, and of whose intellectual activities he is evidently ignorant: but there we are, the English now feeling themselves to be inferior to every other people in Europe, they are left only with the Welsh and the Scots to sneer at – preferably the Welsh, because there are fewer of them, and they have a language of their own.

Mr Kingston and his kind should stop and think for every Englishman making cruel jokes about Wales, there are 10,000 foreigners laughing at England.

Ms IAN MORRIS
Member
Yr Academi Gymreig
Llangyrdy, Gwynedd

Giving a lift to car sharing

Sir: The RAC would be delighted to see more car sharing on non-tube-strike days (Letters, 31 July), however, our research shows there is a problem with the "Not in my front seat" syndrome. Our surveys suggest that car sharing is a good idea for everybody else but when it comes down to it the NIMF's mentality wins the day.

For car sharing to work on a wider scale we need more incentives such as "high occupancy vehicle" lanes, preferential office parking for car sharers and a change of attitude. When I walk to work on the next strike day with a sign for "Trafalgar Square" hopefully some drivers will overcome the NIMF's syndrome and give me a lift.

EDMUND KING
Head of Campaigns
RAC
London SW1

Life, liberty and happiness

Sir: The phrase "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is not to be found in the US Constitution of 1787 as you maintain (leading article: "Why the Government should give us all a break", 31 July). Rather, it is in the Declaration of Independence from the British Crown, penned by Thomas Jefferson, 11 years earlier.

STEVEN HENNING SIEVERTS
London NW6

Non-U not known

Sir: It is misleading to credit Nancy Mitford with the "invention of U and Non-U language" (Obituaries, 25 July) on two counts. No one person invents a language and in this instance the dichotomy was adumbrated by Professor A S C Ross in a 35-page article in the Finnish scholarly journal *Neuropsychologische Mitteilungen* in 1954.

It was Ross who coined the terms U and Non-U, but they failed to gain a firm foothold in the language and are scarcely known to students of English today.

JOHN ATKINSON
Stegness,
Lincolnshire

analysis

Burying the Crusader's sword

Nine hundred years after a Pope denounced Muslims as a 'vile race', a leading Western newspaper talks of an 'Islamist gangrene'. The language of hatred is frightening European leaders and hindering peace, says Robert Fisk

A few months ago, the telephone rang in my Beirut apartment and a shy, academic voice asked if he could present me with a document. Dr Georges Jabbour turned out to be a Syrian who worked in the office of his prime minister but whose personal mission had nothing to do with his government. The document he gave me was addressed to Pope John Paul II and it asked, with great courtesy and without resentment, if – on the 900th anniversary of Pope Urban II's appeal for a holy war against Muslims – His Holiness would like to apologise for the Crusades.

"Most of the European Kingdoms and Empires participated in the Crusader wars against Arabs and Muslims," Dr Jabbour noted. Could not Pope John Paul say something that was "close to an apology to the descendants of those who were the victims of the implementation of those decisions [for a Crusade]?"

The 192 years of blood and fire that Europe was to unleash on the Middle East – in which both Muslims and Jews were massacred by the Crusaders, some of whom indulged in cannibalism – had been preceded by Pope Urban's chilling condemnation of Muslims as "an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God". It was a holy act, he said, to "exterminate this vile race from our [sic] lands".

Dr Jabbour's letter 900 years later hopefully predicted that an apology from the modern-day Pope would "assuage and bring peace to the Islamic world as a whole".

I was reminded of my unexpected Syrian visitor this week by something familiar in the rhetoric that the West is now using against its real or supposed enemies in the Middle East – and by the very real danger that this language represents for Europe. "Islamic terror" is now a password for anger and hatred on American television and in the American

and Israeli press, an insidious punctuation mark that pays no attention to religion or history, and often little attention to proof. At Sharm el-Sheikh and again this week, President Clinton – supported by world leaders – appears to have launched a modern-day Crusade that goes far beyond the outrage that any sane person must feel towards the acts of criminal violence now afflicting the United States.

Of course, when suicide bombers or gunmen – in Israel or in the West – boast that they murder civilians in the name of Islam, it is understandable that many millions of Israelis and Westerners will believe that

The association of religion and violence has now reached racist proportions

"Islamic terror" is their enemy. That is what the bombers want them to believe. Oddly enough, the Serbs who massacred and raped their way through the Muslims of Bosnia were never described as servants of "Christian terror", but that is another story. Nevertheless, the association of religion and violence has now reached racist proportions, not just in America but in Israel and in Europe. Who would have believed, for example, that a respected European newspaper would carry a cartoon of a Muslim cleric portrayed as an octopus with tentacles spreading from his robes opposite an article headlined "Islamist gangrene"? But that is exactly what *Le Monde* did on 6 March: the cartoon was by Ronald Searle, the article by Marcel Goldstein, vice-president of the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France.

And what of the so-called "security expert" who announced that "hundreds of Iranian-directed Muslim maniacs are emerging from the Middle East woodwork... slobbering over the promised virgins waiting them in paradise". This "expert" was quoted, in all seriousness, in an article on the TWA disaster in last Thursday's *Jerusalem Post* by Dennis Eisenberg and Uri Dan, both of whom stated as fact that the Iranians had set off a bomb on the airliner.

The language of hatred – of "terror" and of "slobbering maniacs" – cannot be dismissed as journalistic. Imagine, for instance, the disgust we would feel – rightly – if the massacre of 29 Palestinians by an Israeli settler in Hebron had been followed by an article in *Le Monde* entitled "Jewish gangrene": in fact, Baruch Goldstein's bloodbath was never even called an act of "terror" – because that is not quite the "terror" against which Americans and Europeans are being asked to campaign.

Violent language, however, is becoming endemic throughout the West and there are signs that it is beginning to frighten some European governments. At least one European foreign minister has felt obliged to warn his colleagues that "Islamic terrorism" is a "deliberate name-calling" and that it serves to hide the nature of that injustice. For as the American-Israeli "peace process" finally crumbles to dust in the aftermath of the Likud election victory, the last thing Europe needs now is to pursue an American-Israeli crusade against something called "Islamic terror" – and for one simple, overriding reason. America has identified national interests in the Middle East. Cynics might sum them up as Israel and oil, though not necessarily in that order. Europe also has interests but we have something infinitely more important. The nations of the Middle East are our neighbours.



The Crusader as Christian hero: a popular 19th century Spanish print. The nations of the Middle East will always be our neighbours: should Europeans pursue an American-Israeli crusade against something called the 'Islamic terror'? Photograph: Mary Evans Picture Library

relationship with the US, however essential in the short term, will not last for ever. If Israel was an "unsinkable battleship" during the Cold War and a dubious standard-bearer against "Islamic terror" today, these are transitory roles. And if the day comes when Israel no longer exerts such enormous influence on US foreign policy, it is to Europe that many Israelis will look for a new form of alliance, not – given the wickedness of Europeans this century – with much confidence, but through growing necessity all the same.

Europe remains weak in the Middle East, its failure to form a common European policy symbolic of that frailty. And Europe's sins against the people of two great Middle East faiths are self-evident. Last year marked the end of the Holocaust, the greatest atrocity ever perpetrated against human beings, in which Europeans tried to destroy those of their fellow Europeans who were people of an ancient Middle East faith. Arabs will remind us that in a year's time we will pass the 80th anniversary of Lord Balfour's declaration that the Jews should have a homeland in Palestine. And what Muslim can forget that just over a year ago soldiers of a European country drank champagne with the men who were about to massacre thousands of the innocents whom those same soldiers were supposed to protect at a town called Srebrenica.

And yet in many parts of the Middle East, Europe is still seen as an enlightened international community whose friendship will last longer than that of the US. Something of this idea lay behind the Barcelona conference last year, when both Arabs and Israelis came together in a relationship based upon partnership rather than dependence. And an EU policy of complementarity – of standing by the original terms of a Middle East peace, rather than secret peace deals with no international guarantees – may even produce some form of safety net when the elaborate construction of the "peace process" turns out to be as ill-fabricated and unsafe as most Arabs – and many Israelis – now suspect. But that same Europe cannot afford to maintain these relationships while going to war with "Islamic terror". For Islam – alongside Christianity and Judaism – is the religion of our neighbours from southern Russia to Turkey to Bosnia to Morocco.

Dr Jabbour never received his apology from the Pope. But at least he should feel confident that there will be no more Crusades.

bour. They will never be neighbours of America. They will always be neighbours of ours.

It is this realisation that lies at the heart of a slow but growing European re-engagement in the Middle East, one that is not opposed to America but which may well infuriate Americans and some – though not all – Israelis. The process was marked by last year's European refusal to join President Clinton's embargo against Iran, an embargo which he announced at a Jewish meeting in New York, but which was immediately rejected by the European powers whose policy of "dialogue" rather than confrontation has now become de facto EU policy. A similar practice – which in no way expresses approval of the dictatorships involved – applies to Syria, against whom some American commentators are now advising pre-emptive military strikes (by Israel, of course, rather than by the United States).

Last April, although initially criticised by EU officials, the French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, flew to the Middle East during Israel's bombardment of southern Lebanon, expressing to Israel the anger of President Chirac – who had just paid a state visit to Lebanon – and eventually playing a leading role in a ceasefire between the

Israelis and the Hizbollah. It was De Charette who personally visited the scene of Israel's massacre at Qana. And as a reward for its later peacekeeping, France is now to sit on the – admittedly rather impotent – five-power ceasefire committee. And then in early July, Germany – whose "dialogue" with Iran has proved the closest and most economically advantageous of all European states – was able to mediate between the Iranians, Syrians and Israelis to secure the exchange of bodies and prisoners of both sides in the south Lebanon war.

There are other signs of European impatience with America's policy in the Middle East: its growing awareness that America's uncritical support for Israel is alienating ever more millions of Arabs has led to pointed remarks from both Britain and France for the need to follow signed peace agreements between the Palestinians and Israel. France has now objected to America's campaign to prevent Boutros Boutros Ghali – an Egyptian minister – seeking UN re-election. And it should not be forgotten that it was Europe which accepted long before the Americans and Israelis that the PLO should be involved in peace negotiations. At a time when President Jimmy Carter

was forced to rid himself of a UN ambassador who had privately met with a PLO adviser, British and other European ambassadors around the Middle East were meeting publicly with Yasser Arafat's senior officials. Indeed, the 1980 Venice declaration specifically stated that the PLO – still "interna-

In many parts of the Middle East Europe is still seen as an enlightened community

tional terrorists", according to Israel and America – should be "associated" with peace negotiations. When European foreign ministers met in Paris just under four years later, they reiterated the terms of the Venice agreement, adding their support to what they called the "right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that this implies." In Brussels in 1987, Community foreign ministers were demanding an improvement of living conditions for Palestinians in occu-

ped territory. In the same year, EC declarations in Copenhagen and Bonn supported George Schultz's peace initiatives but deplored what they referred to as Israel's "repressive measures... which are in violation of international law and human rights". Most important of all, the EU has remained steadfast in its belief that UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 – the end of Israeli occupation in return for the security of all Middle East states, the very formula now rejected by the Israelis – must remain the unalterable bedrock of peace in the region.

But there is another element of US foreign policy in the Middle East that can also prove perilous to its allies, not only to those nations such as Egypt which are now locked into a straitjacket of loyalty on pain of losing the massive US subsidies that save it from bankruptcy, but to Israel itself. Ever since the foundation of their state, Israelis have been concerned – and rightly so – at the extent of their own dependency on the United States. Israeli politicians of left and right have noted the degree to which Israel must rely upon the US not just for its military and political protection but for its financial solvency. And many Israelis suspect that this rela-

This column proposes to marry you...

I have an important and joyous announcement to make today. This column has now been licensed for the solemnisation of weddings! Yes, from today onwards, you will be able to get married in this very space to the man or woman of your choice, or to anyone else if the man or woman of your choice is already married to someone else!

As you know, the most unlikely places can now be licensed for the enactment of the marriage service.

Hotels have been used. Theatres are being used. Opera houses, Pullman railway cars, snooker halls, even churches.

Of course, none of this is totally new, as the Americans have been getting married in the oddest places for scores of years. Americans have been married underwater, married falling from aeroplanes with parachutes, married nude, married on horseback...

There was even a report the other day that a pair had been married on the Internet.

Now, I am not one of those

who look down on the Internet. Yes, for a long time I did think that Internet was one of those new railway companies which the Government is paying to destroy our rail system. No, I am not actually plugged into the Internet myself. But, yes, I can see that there are vast sums of money to be made from the Internet, so I am not likely to sneeze at it. And I thought to myself: If people can get married on the Internet, why not in my column?

The man who hands out licences for these things thought the same way. "Why not indeed?" he said. Admittedly, I may not have explained exactly the circumstances under which I intend to conduct services. He may have been left with the impression that the weddings I shall be arranging will take place in the small chapel on the 15th floor of the *Independent* building. They will not be taking place there. There is, to be brutally honest, no chapel on the 15th floor, as far as I know. The only chapels known to journalists are the ones that

call meetings and pass motions of confidence in the management, or, sometimes, the opposite.

But the man who hands out licences to print wedding certificates might not have given me a licence if he had known I proposed to do it all through the printed page. He was very insistent on asking me if there were adequate toilet facilities, and sufficient fire exits, and health care, and counselling, and heaven knows what, and I think if I told him that a newspaper column has none of these things, he might have taken a melancholy turn.

As it is, I have a licence to allow marriages to take place on the premises, which I take to mean in the parlours of this column, and I intend to start as soon as possible before complications set in. The system will be very simple. Interested parties will send me their details and a large cheque. The clergyman, or registrar, or whoever is chosen to conduct the ceremony will send both of them the questions they would normally be asked in a "live" wedding. They will send back the answers, which for the most part are simple ones like "Yes" or "No", or "I do". This will then all be printed in this column, together with a best man's speech, etc, etc, and the happy couple will be married.

By economising on space and using small print, etc, etc, I calculate that we can fit up to three weddings into one column.

Of course, if anyone knows of any just cause or impediment why the marriage should not take place, he or she should let me know well

before the event, and for a mutually agreed sum I will insert his or her objections into the service.

The person being joined in matrimony must also agree not to indulge in any activity that might reflect badly on marriage, such as appearing on *Blind Date* or going on the front of *Hello!* magazine, or indeed the inside of *Hello!* magazine.

There will, necessarily, be no videotaped record of the wedding, but the happy couple may buy an engraved and framed copy of this column on the day they were married in it for a very reasonable £110.

This column cannot cope, with staging the reception as well, but I believe that our fellow publication, *Section Two*, is setting up the facilities for this. Please contact them for details.

Meanwhile, if you're young and affianced and looking for a novel kind of wedding, something quite out of the ordinary, I'm ready and waiting. Let's see the colour of your money!



Miles Kington

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سكرا من الاميل

the commentators

Giles Radice's report on the Scott inquiry finds a system of ministerial unaccountability supported by supine MPs on both sides

In the end, who is responsible?

For more than three years the dark shadow of Sir Richard Scott's arms-to-Iraq inquiry loomed ominously over the Major administration. At times the effort of rebutting Sir Richard's most menacing accusations paralysed the government machine. For weeks before its publication in February, the inquiry utterly consumed what one of its potential victims, William Waldegrave, once aptly called the "media-political complex".

Six months later, it is not easy to remember what all the fuss was about. Partly, of course, it is our fault in the media half of Mr Waldegrave's complex. There was high-grade parliamentary theatre, but no resignations, despite the devastating eloquence of Robin Cook in the Commons, and we rather lost interest. But it is also a tribute to the resilience of the governing classes that they absorbed with such efficiency the shock of Sir Richard's complaints that Parliament was not given the truth by ministers about the waiving of export guidelines in the sale of equipment to Saddam Hussein. The dogs barked, then the caravan moved on.

Since then, the wheels of government have ground exceedingly slow and small. No minister resigned. No civil servant criticised in the report has been disciplined. Instead, this week, with MPs safely on holiday, we see the first detailed official response. It is a splendidly innocuous and bureaucratic DTI consultation paper answering Sir Richard's demand for a comprehensive review of government export controls. No firm proposals are made, and we are

assured, just in case there was any fear that ministers might do something hasty, that when the consultation period is over, there may be further "detailed consultation ... as proposals for change are worked up in detail". In other words, don't expect anything this side of an election.

In sharp contrast, the Commons public services select committee, chaired by the Labour MP Giles Radice, in a report this week at least attempts to grapple with the most far-reaching questions raised by Scott: what are the limits of ministerial responsibility, and how to hold the executive to account? In particular, it seeks to update the doctrine unambiguously set out by Gladstone in 1879: "In every free state, for every public act, someone must be responsible; and the question is, who shall it be? The British constitution answers: 'The minister and the minister exclusively'."

It is a commonplace among most modern politicians that this no longer works quite literally. In today's system of government, after all, a minister simply can't know everything that goes on in his department. And that was part of the ministers' defence in the case of arms to Iraq: they didn't tell Parliament the truth because they didn't always

know what their civil servants were doing. But this leaves an accountability black hole, lucidly identified by the Radice report: "If when things go wrong, it is held that ministers are not to blame because they did not (knowingly) mislead Parliament and civil servants are not to blame because they acted as servants of ministers, then the unsatisfactory outcome is that nobody is to blame."

The inescapable subtext of the Radice report is that MPs have been almost wilfully supine in dealing with this problem. Scott accepted that ministers couldn't be held responsible for matters they knew nothing about; but added that the quid pro quo was that they had to disclose fully the information that

Parliament needs to decide who was responsible. And this, of course, ministers are unwilling to do, especially if full disclosure would suggest that they are not quite as blameless as they claim. Which makes the idea that the executive is fully accountable to Parliament one of the bigger lies at the heart of our political system.

The Radice committee has at least tried to pose the question of how to change that within the British constitution. Here, unlike the United States, there is no clear separation between the executive and the legislature, and the government has a built-in parliamentary majority.

Potentially, as the report recognises, the sharpest instruments for holding the executive to account are select committees. But the committees are themselves closely under the patronage of party managers. It is not just that the governing party has a majority on all the most important ones; it is also that the whips have the most influence in determining who sits on them. The history of the select committees is littered with examples of government obstruction.

Take as a recent example the trade and industry committee's investigation into whether Jonathan

Aitken, the Tory MP and BMARC director, knew whether the company was selling naval cannon to Iran. The committee was denied access to classified intelligence documents. It remarked on this in its final report, but it didn't bother to complain publicly at the time, when it might have made a difference. It found no evidence against Mr Aitken.

Nor should one assume that Labour-dominated committees would behave any differently. Indeed, any temptation among Labour MPs to agitate for reform now is bound to be tempered by the prospect of a Blair government. The truth is that Parliament as a watchdog has been muzzled by a conspiracy between ministers and wannabe ministers, which together means the large majority of MPs on both sides of the House. Mr Radice's committee makes some limited but sensible suggestions, including greater powers for select committees. But will they happen? Backbench MPs collectively, and across party boundaries, have proven themselves jolly good at mass revolts over their own pay packets. They have shown precious little desire to act in the same way to strengthen their powers over the executive.

Unless MPs, like the movers and shakers on US Congressional committees, start to regard a backbench career as at least as worthwhile as that of the junior minister for paper clips and widgets, that is unlikely to change. And until it does, the modern answer to Gladstone's question of 1879 will continue to be a resounding: "Not me, Guv."

DONALD MACINTYRE

This time the mob has right on its side

Politicians often rise above the clamour from the streets but on gun control the mass instinct is sound and six Tories have got it sadly wrong

There are mobs and there are majorities. A majority is a large group of people with a vaguely, passively held opinion. A mob is a large group of people with a furiously, actively embraced idea. Thus there is a majority who, if asked, will say they are in favour of hanging - this is not, for the moment, on the mob agenda. But there is a mob who, after Dunblane and with-

ultimate legitimacy in modern government. They are also the only force that can keep politicians in power. So sometimes the mob must be appeased. When Margaret Thatcher used the word "swamped" in some remarks about immigration, she was quietly and deliberately feeding the racist indications of the mob. Now that Michael Howard is fighting the judges over the sentences for the two child killers of Jamie Bulger, he is clearly doing so with the confidence that the vengeful mob is on his side.

What, then, can we make of the six Tories on the home affairs select committee who have outvoted the five Labour members on the issue of banning handguns? Clearly they are thwarting the mob. Most people want handguns banned. This is hardly surprising, because since Dunblane nobody has come up with a coherent argument against a total ban. So these Tories are being both irrational and electorally unsound.

The committee vote was leaked to the *Sun*. It was not due to be known for another two weeks - evidently Tory political managers were hoping to slip this one through in the dog days of August. But yesterday the *Sun* blew that sleazy little plot out of the water and invited its readers to ruin the summers of the six Tories by publishing their office addresses and phone numbers, a move one of them, John Greenway (I'm not proud - his number is 01653 693502), described rather laughably as "utterly despicable".

The *Sun*, typically and, in this

case, justifiably, is keen to keep the mob on the boil. It does not want the gun issue to drift, like capital punishment, into the background, becoming a majority rather than a mob issue. That is fine. Rabble-rousing is what that paper does best and the rabble could not have a more legitimate target than those irredeemable loonies who still want to play with guns.

But what is odd about this affair is the way the committee

has divided along strictly party lines. This, as John Major has said, is not a party issue. Yet the Tories have all voted against a ban, against a mob that plainly has right on its side.

I would guess that a number of factors are at work here. First, the Tories may have calculated that this will all blow over, so why bother with legislation that will be messy and inspire small but vicious pockets of resistance? Second, the police have apparently murmured something about the impracticability of a ban - and "impracticable" is always a word that gives committees the chance to creep softly and silently away. Third, there may well be a feeling among the Tories that the liberties of gen-

The rabble could not have a more legitimate target than loonies who play with guns



BRYAN APPELYARD

out being asked, want to see handguns banned. In these cases, the majority is wrong and the mob right.

Good politics frequently must be anti-democratic. Both mobs and majorities must often be resisted. If, for example, hanging became a mob issue, then politicians should resist because capital punishment is morally wrong, brutalises entire societies and never works as a deterrent. This may be paternalistic, but it would be right because sometimes politicians really do know better than the electorate what is good for them.

On the other hand, democracy, crudely understood, implies that the mob or the majority must always be right. The people are, after all, the only

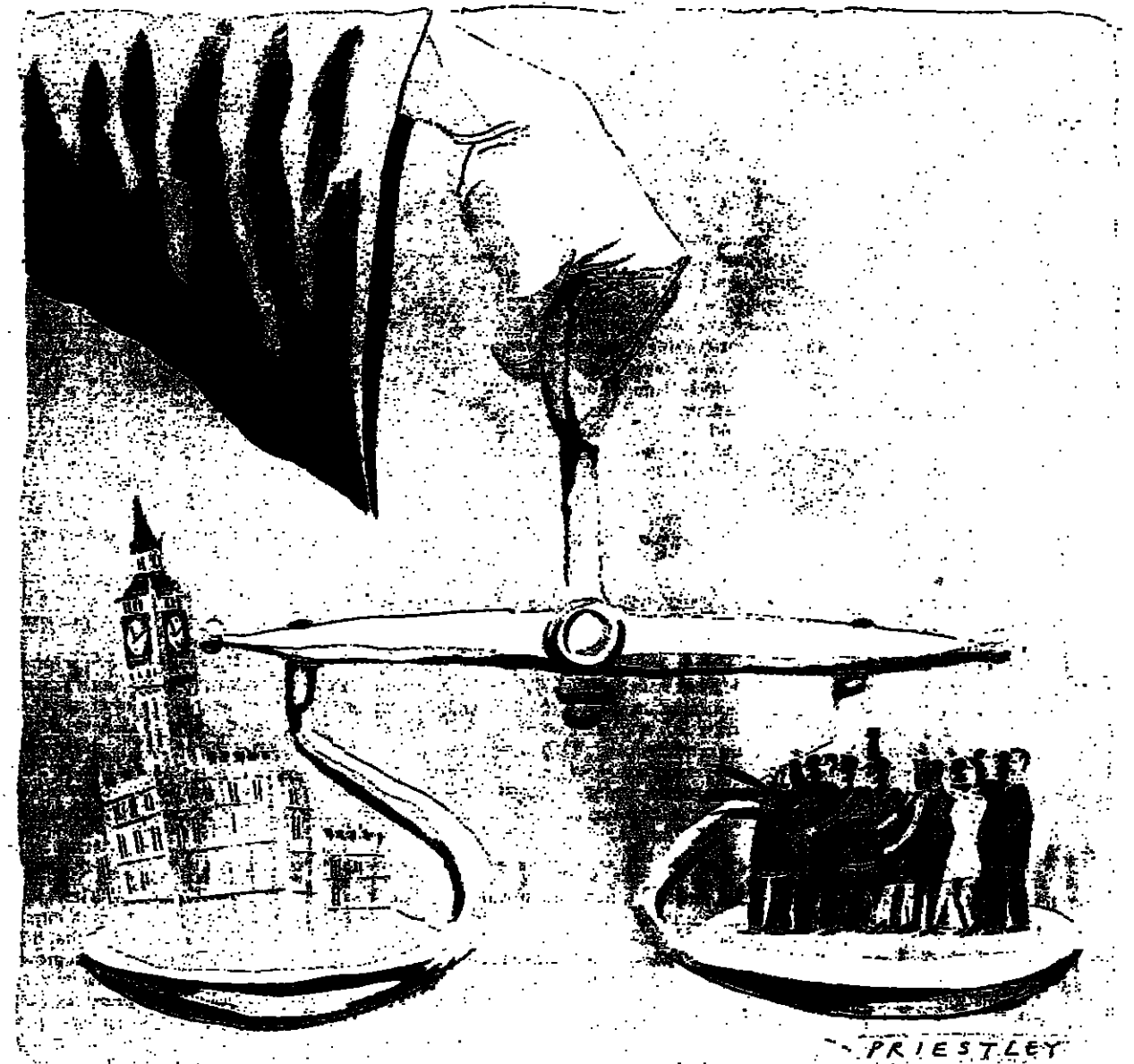
ultimate legitimacy in modern government. They are also the only force that can keep politicians in power. So sometimes the mob must be appeased. When Margaret Thatcher used the word "swamped" in some remarks about immigration, she was quietly and deliberately feeding the racist indications of the mob. Now that Michael Howard is fighting the judges over the sentences for the two child killers of Jamie Bulger, he is clearly doing so with the confidence that the vengeful mob is on his side.

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The *Sun*, typically and, in this

The rabble could not have a more legitimate target than loonies who play with guns



PRIESTLEY

society must have a reasonable interest in limiting the amount of damage that criminals can do. It also has an interest in stopping the maiming and killing of thousands of children a year in domestic handgun accidents.

But you can see the attraction of the libertarian argument to a certain kind of bone-headed right-winger. It offers a nice combination of moral muscularity and simple sedition. Don't do anything that might remotely infringe a supposed liberty because it's people that cause crime, not guns. But mean-

while, you can have as much fun as you like locking up more and more criminals. Tough on crime, but actually rather nice to the causes of crime.

Michael Howard provides further evidence of this ideological inclination. He goes along with the mob when it comes to keeping people in prison and fighting off more liberally inclined judges. But his party shows no sign of buying the mob line on guns. One malign contradiction of American Republicanism has been inserted into British politics.

If this really is happening

within the Tory party, then they are in an even worse state than I thought. They are drifting towards a centrist and anti-social form of politics which is, in fact, the opposite of traditional, socially sensitive British conservatism. If the party as a whole goes along with these six pro-gun MPs, then it will also be dis-

playing a disastrous failure of political imagination. For, in the case of gun control, it could be in a no-lose situation. The mob wants to ban handguns and the Tories want to keep their votes and their consciences intact. What more could they want? Blood? No, silly me, they've already got that.

Something like two dozen sports are supposedly represented at the Atlanta Olympics - so why is it that, whenever I tune in, it's always weight-lifting? No matter what the time of day, there's always some colossal Ukrainian or gargantuan Greek adapting that curious toilet position in front of 225kg of circular metal and looking worried.

On Saturday's pre-lottery TV, the screen was full of leotards. Sunday morning television brought nothing but portly crop-dusters from collective farms grunting and bulging and being embraced by their trainers. I was in a wine bar on Monday night where the TV set in the corner featured yet another wily Kalmuk dusting his palms with what appeared to be a kilo of cocaine and preparing to burst veins for the glory of the former Soviet Union. At noon on Tuesday, when you'd imagine most of Atlanta would be slugging a bed, one more Greek could be seen doing that disgusting tummy-belt adjustment that seems to be crucial to one's concentration.

Weight-lifters are on the box all the time. You start to wonder if it's a more important branch of the sporting world than you'd realised. Could it be that every other Olympic sport is merely a distraction - that all the flap attending the 100m, the 400m and that nancysish hop-skip-and-jump routine is just a means of passing the time before returning to the real sporting business of watching chaps trying to hoist a house-load of avoidpoids, with their arms without exploding?

The poet Christopher Reid once compared a weight-lifter

to a human telephone. It's a brilliant image which took the sight of a wobbling, two-ton barrel being hoisted aloft, and re-imagined it as a receiver bouncing ("Somebody answer it!") on a shuffling cradle.

But for me the attraction of the spectacle lies elsewhere - in that weird moment of existential crisis, when weight-lifters give up trying. If they can't shift the weight, they don't just put the thing back on the ground, they jump back from it, or shy away from it, or throw it away in disgust. It's a moment of Oh-for-God's-sake rejection that you'll find in no other sport.

Can you imagine Imran Khan screeching to a halt in the middle of his run-up and the umpire shouting "Forget it" at the umpire? Or Pete Sampras in mid-serve, suddenly thinking "The hell with this," leaving the ball hanging in mid-air and wandering off? Weight-lifting displays a marvellous can-do protest in a relentlessly can-do world. More power to the swollen peds.

THURSDAY DIARY

John Walsh

Try to imagine Imran Khan stopping mid run-up and mouthing 'forget it' at the umpire

Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions Dept. JK Galbraith, the legendary Canadian economist, breezed into town the other day and took tea at the Ritz with his publishers, Sinclair-Stevenson. Now 88, the elongated sage with the sweet tooth (his luxury choice on *Desert Island Discs* was a supply of maple syrup from his Vermont farm) held forth about single currencies and President Clinton and so forth and, as he prepared to leave, was approached by a fan.

"Professor Galbraith," he breathed, "Such an admirer ... great honour ... would you mind ... my wife, you know?"

The Professor signed his autograph with a flourish. But the chap needed something more, to tell his chums at the Rotary Club.

"Tell me, Professor," he asked, "how can we bring down interest rates?"

Galbraith looked at him. "We can start," he said gravely, "by spending less money at the Ritz."

Lovers of all things Caribbean, from flying fish *escovitch* to laughably corrupt politics, should tune in to Radio 5 Live's *Special Assignment* on Sunday for the first of four investigations into the islands' politico-economic affairs. They're produced by Marina Salandy-Brown, the Trinidadian fireball who used to

pilot Melvyn Bragg's *Start the Week* radio show; but behind the programmes' smooth, rippling, azure-blue etc surface, there lurks a tale of Homeric misfortune.

Ms Salandy-Brown flew to the Caribbean in April with her work cut out; she had arranged to interview half a dozen heads of state on 12 islands, helped by the entrepreneurial skills of a local fixer called Jeremy, who was to present the programmes; the two broadcasters faced the ordeal of a 2,000-mile round trip on a tiny BBC budget.

Things began to go wrong shortly after Ms Salandy-Brown touched down in Port of Spain. First she realised she had left behind her jet bracelet traditionally worn in the islands to ward off the evil eye. Bad mistake. Her helpmeet/presenter Jeremy began to complain of pains in his bones; by the first day of recording, he'd gone down with dengue fever and been ordered to bed for three weeks - the entire duration of the assignment. Then someone tried to hot-wire her car while she was talking to the authorities. And Salandy-Brown discovered that being a female media hustler in the Caribbean carries little clout, as the political bigwigs began to pull out of their promised interviews.

Stranded far from home, with her presenter comatose, she faced the prospect of having to fill four pre-booked programmes with nothing more than recordings of the locals singing *De Big Bamboo*. She was in despair. What was a girl to do?

She found a bar and told her sad tale to a sympathetic local who thought he might be able to help: he was called Jones P. Madeira. Oh please,

thought Salandy-Brown, spare me the joke names. (What was he, a calypso singer?) Amazingly, he turned out to be a national hero, a BBC-trained television executive who had mediated between Kalashnikov-toting revolutionaries and the nervous populace in the coup of 1990.



Marina Salandy-Brown: saved by the man in the bar

(Perhaps from an impulse of gratitude, the people had also voted Jones P. the best-dressed man in Trinidad.)

At his approach, heads of state fawned and genuflected. Recalcitrant politicians came over all loquacious in his company. With Mr Madeira by her side, Salandy-Brown found herself being offered cocktails under ambassadorial banyan trees and shown round the local parliament offices. The programme was saved. It was, she said, like hanging out with Nelson Mandela ...

Sweet story. Happy ending. When you listen to her on Radio 5 Live you may notice the sound of someone who can't believe her luck.

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Stagecoach in £475m rail takeover

Porterbrook rolling stock purchase raises fears of threat to competition

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
and MICHAEL HARRISON

A handful of rail executives were turned into multi-millionaires yesterday as Stagecoach, the aggressive bus and rail group, unveiled a £475m takeover of the rolling stock leasing company Porterbrook.

But the deal provoked immediate criticism and a full-scale regulatory investigation was launched. If the deal is allowed through it would fundamentally change the structure of the privatised railway industry.

The consolidation of the bus industry into three large groupings continued yesterday with the acquisition of North East Bus by the Cowie Group. The three groups - Cowie, Stagecoach and FirstBus - now have a 55 per cent share of the UK bus market.

Cowie, the car sales, bus and finance group, based in Sunderland, paid £24.5m to National Express group for the bus company, North East Bus has annual sales of almost £29m and runs services in County Durham and Teesside in North-east England, where Cowie already owns Northumbria Buses and Yorkshire Buses. North East Bus made a profit of £3m last year and owns 422 buses and has nearly 1,200 employees.

The move by Stagecoach towards vertical integration poses a series of questions for the rail regulator, John Swift, and the Office of Fair Trading to consider. Mr Swift issued a 22 paragraph consultation paper on the proposed deal, giving respondents three weeks to send in their views. He has asked, in particular, for views on the

just seven months ago it was valued at £15m although the Porterbrook chief and the remaining 49 staff are thought to have paid only a fraction of that amount for their shares.

Stagecoach, which already owns the South West Trains franchise and is bidding for the 12 remaining passenger franchises being auctioned off immediately offered undertakings to safeguard competition in a bid to prevent the deal being referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

It also said it would be placing an order for £90m for new rolling stock for South West Trains. Previously, the company had said that no new trains were needed for the seven year term of the franchise which started last February.

The carefully constructed edifice of rail privatisation developed over the past three years by the Government has been put in jeopardy by the proposed deal. Labour's new shadow transport secretary, Andrew Smith, immediately raised questions about the merger. He said: "It is a matter of concern that Stagecoach is now in a position from which it might be able to inhibit competitors. Any potential bidders for the remaining franchises will need to look carefully at the implications of this deal where rail companies will be forced to lease rolling stock from their competitors."

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Full steam ahead: Brian Souter, chairman of Stagecoach, may, however, be required to slam on the brakes concerning further rolling stock acquisition

effect of the merger on investment in new rolling stock and on competition in the market for rolling stock and in the provision of passenger services. He will report to the Office of Fair Trading which, in turn, will advise the DTI. Mr Swift's position is complicated by the limits of his power. While contracts between Railtrack and

the train operating companies, the rolling stock companies such as Porterbrook are exempt from his scrutiny.

The ramifications for the rail industry are very uncertain and are worrying many of the private companies which have entered the market since privatisation began in earnest a year ago. The inter-relationship between the

different players in the rail industry are already complex and if one company is vertically integrated, others fear it will be in a position to outbid rivals in the franchising process.

Aware of these fears, Stagecoach's statement yesterday said that the terms offered by Porterbrook to any train operating company "will not unfairly dis-

criminate" compared with companies controlled by Stagecoach.

However, such promises met with derision among some of the other players in the rail industry. One senior source said: "If anyone thinks that Porterbrook will be offering the same deal to other bidders for train companies as they will to Stagecoach, they are living in cloud-

cuckoo land. There isn't the faintest chance of that happening. This is a red-tooth-and-claw environment."

While Stagecoach won the first franchise, South West Trains, it has been in the bidding for all eight so far allocated and has promised to bid for all the remainder of the 25.

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Toyota warns Tories on Europe

MICHAEL HARRISON

The Japanese car manufacturer Toyota, one of the biggest overseas investors in Britain, yesterday warned the Government about the dangers of becoming more detached from Europe and of turning its back on a single currency.

Toyota has spent more than £1bn on its UK car and engine plants. A senior executive of the company also indicated that Toyota's attitude towards investing in Britain would not be altered by the appearance of a Labour government.

Iwao Okajima, an executive vice-president of Toyota, said: "I sincerely hope Britain will not become semi-detached from Europe or a single currency, because we are here not just to serve the UK market but the whole of Europe."

Mr Okajima added that if a single currency was adopted, it would be "incredibly beneficial" to manufacturers in Britain. He also said there seemed to be a very slim gap between the policies of the two main parties and that whichever party won the next election, it would probably pursue "moderate policies".

His comments appear to undermine the claim last month from Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, that large numbers of inward investors would be deterred from coming to Britain in the event of a Labour victory.

Capacity at Toyota's Burnaston plant in Derbyshire is set to rise to 200,000 by the end of 1998, when production of a second model, the Corolla, begins alongside the existing Camry. The car plant and the engine factory on Deeside, north Wales will, by then, be employing 3,000 people. Mr Okajima said that this year just over a quarter of the 400,000 cars it expects to sell in Europe would be built in the UK. But in two years' time it hopes to be selling 500,000 cars of which 40 per cent would be built in the UK.

He said that the advantages of being able to deal in a single currency would be substantial and that most entrepreneurs would be against Britain moving away from Europe or opposing monetary union.

The Government is still under intense pressure from Conservative right-wingers to rule out participation in a single currency in the lifetime of the next Parliament. The CBI, however, has said it will not support a manifesto that rules out the option of joining a single currency after the election.

Telewest shake-up prompts chief executive's departure



Alan Michels: Could pocket £1m in lieu of notice

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

The chief executive of the country's largest cable company is to leave with immediate effect, it emerged last night, in the wake of the latest management shake-up in the struggling UK cable sector.

The departure of Alan Michels, head of Telewest Communications, follows a board meeting yesterday to discuss management restructuring and future strategy. Mr Michels, who could pocket £1m of com-

peneration is expected to be replaced by Stephen Davidson, currently finance director, who would become the first British executive to head up one of the top UK cable operators. Mr Davidson, a banker by training, has worked with large media clients, and was senior vice-president, corporate finance, at Lorimar, now a subsidiary of Time Warner.

The change marks the third time this year a large cable company has changed chief executives. Most recently, Dan Somers took over from Alan

Bates at Bell Cablemedia, the third largest operator.

Industry sources said the changes reflected a desire to replace largely technical management with executives more attuned to marketing, in an effort to boost disappointingly low penetration rates, particularly for cable television.

Mr Michels, who joined Telewest from one of its parent companies, US West, in 1994, spent most of his career in financial analysis. Under his direction, the cable operator saw telephony penetration rates im-

prove, although the cable television side performed far less well. He is to spend some time with his family, following his return to the US.

"I hope this means the end of a steady stream of Americans coming in to run cable companies for two-year stints," one Telewest insider said.

Another senior industry source added: "The company has been a bit of a shambles from a customer point of view." But Mr Michels received support from some colleagues. One said: "He has worked bloody

hard in a very difficult industry."

Mr Michels was on a three-year fixed contract worth £500,000 a year. He is expected to be paid £1m in lieu of a two-year notice period. His remuneration had included an amount to cover tax liabilities as well as a housing allowance worth £63,000 a year.

One industry observer predicted last night that the restructuring could mark a turning point for the cable industry, which has been unable to find television programming to attract customers and drive sub-

scriptions. Telewest and the second-largest operator, Nynex CableComms, effectively dropped plans to develop cable-exclusive programming, and signed long-term supply agreements with BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster.

The cable industry is just over halfway through a £10bn plan to link UK homes to cable for television and telephony services. The sector has been given a rough ride by the City, which has been impatient over slow growth of the subscriber base.

Comment, page 19

Salvesen open to higher offer

NIGEL COPE

Christian Salvesen rejected the proposed £1bn offer from Hays, the rival transport group, yesterday describing it as "inadequate", though it left the door open for a "significantly" improved approach.

At a crunch board meeting in London, which included two members of the controlling Salvesen family, the directors voted unanimously to reject

the 370p-a-share offer following advice from their advisers, SBC Warburg.

In a letter to Hays, Christian Salvesen said: "You have indicated in both your letters that you may be prepared to improve your terms. The board would consider a significantly improved financial proposal should you wish to make one to it."

Salvesen chief executive Chris Masters stressed that the board was "in no way solic-

iting an offer". He repeated his view that he did not consider the industrial logic of the deal compelling and that it did not reflect the value of the company.

Hays said it was "considering" its position but it seems unlikely that the company would give up after the first attempt. One institutional investor described the 370p offer as "just a sighting shot". Ronnie Frost, chairman of Hays, has not ruled out going hostile but would prefer

to reach an agreed deal as the Salvesen family controls 38 per cent of the shares. Some family members have expressed interest in an improved deal and this may give Hays hope that it can get some of the family on its side.

However, it is unclear how much higher Hays can afford to go. An offer above 400p is considered unlikely. Christian Salvesen shares fell 4p to 356p with Hays unchanged at 429p.

Rebuffed names plan to fight on in court

PETER RODGERS
Financial Editor

A last-ditch attempt to avert a judicial review of the Lloyd's £3.2bn rescue plan failed yesterday when rebel names were rebuffed at a meeting with the market authorities. The Paying Names Action Group met Lloyd's officials and the market's legal adviser Barry O'Brien, a senior partner at Freshfields.

The names asked for extra help for those who had paid their debts in full, who do not benefit as much from the £3.2bn rescue as those who refused. A Lloyd's spokesman said the group had been "left in no doubt of the vigour with which any action would be contested". Mr O'Brien said afterwards: "If they insist, they are entitled to their day in court."

Anticipating a battle, Lloyd's said it had recruited three leading Queen's Counsel who were specialists in judicial review.

Lloyd's case against attempts to overturn its £3.2bn settlement offer had been reviewed by the three QCs by solicitors Slaughter and May and by the Department of Trade and Industry and its lawyers and the result had been a "fair old choir of QCs singing to the same tune". Mr O'Brien said. A spokesman reiterated that no more could be done to change the offer.

The meeting came as Lloyd's mailed formal offers to 34,000 members detailing the effect on them of the rescue, on which they have to vote by 28 August. Lloyd's also announced that it had won a case establishing that it had the right to receive cash won by names litigating against the market. It also named the trustees for Equitas, the reinsurance vehicle for the rescue and announced plans for new Scottish limited partnerships which will allow names to continue in the market but with limited liability.

Cable firms renew BT dirty tricks row

Cable operators resumed their bitter attack on BT last night, accusing the telecoms giant of continuing a controversial dirty tricks campaign aimed at winning back customers, writes Mathew Horsman.

According to information gathered by the Cable Communications Association, seven fresh complaints of improper

tele-marketing have been received, and these will be sent to Ofcom, the regulator, today or tomorrow.

In addition, several cable operators, including Bell Cablemedia, have unearthed complaints that cable customers were given misinformation by BT tele-marketers, as part of the Win Back campaign.

Julie Chobrynska, a former trainer at BT's Win Back operation in Bristol, said yesterday: "Staff did tell customers they would not be able to get a telephone directory service if they remained with cable."

Ofcom cleared BT of any wrongdoing in a report published last month. However, the watchdog said last night it

would look into the new allegations, as part of its investigation into claims by Which? magazine that Win Back staff have routinely misinformed cable customers over comparisons between cable and BT.

A BT spokeswoman said: "We are concerned by further allegations and will investigate."

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	3703.20	+54.70	+0.9	3857.10	3632.30
FTSE 250	4230.60	+11.50	+0.3	4568.60	4015.30
FTSE 350	1958.10	+14.70	+0.8	1945.40	1616.60
FT Small Cap	2081.19	-1.99	-0.1	2244.36	1954.06
FT All Share	1835.41	+13.33	+0.7	1924.17	1791.95
New York	5620.03	+38.10	+0.7	5779.00	5032.84
Dollar	20682.33	-187.50	-0.9	23566.80	19735.70
Hong Kong	10681.42	+95.56	+0.9	11994.99	10204.87
Frankfurt	2473.35	+15.87	+0.6	2503.49	2253.85

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields	
1 Month	1 Year	1 Year	1 Month	1 Year	Long Bond
5.75	6.08	7.90	5.75	6.12	8.01
5.56	6.17	6.81	5.56	6.19	7.00
0.47	1.09	3.30	0.47	2.98	6.85
3.08	3.50	6.37	3.08	6.68	6.93

CURRENCIES					
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥	Pound	Dollar	
1.5571	0.6422	1.6001	Yesterday	Yesterday	Change
1.5571	0.6422	1.6001	1.5571	0.6422	-0.03
1.5571	0.6422	1.6001	1.5571	0.6422	-0.03
1.5571	0.6422	1.6001	1.5571	0.6422	-0.03

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COMMENT

In some respects Stagecoach's Brian Souter has got to be admired for exposing the contradictions in the sell-off by seeking to add a rolling stock company to the passenger franchises he already has and hopes still to get

The rail sell-off comes to a head-on crash

The head-on collision that many predicted would be the inevitable consequence of rail privatisation has occurred even more rapidly than expected. Unsurprisingly, the City is delighted with the latest outing of the Stagecoach Pullman. But its £825m acquisition of the train leasing business Porterbrook has derailed the regulators and left the Transport Secretary Sir George Young looking like the booking clerk who issued a Super Saver before 9.30 in the morning.

In some respects Stagecoach's Brian Souter has got to be admired for exposing the contradictions in the rail sell-off by seeking to add a rolling stock company to the passenger franchises he already has and hopes still to get. Whether admiration is the sensation coursing through Whitehall is less certain.

If rail privatisation was about anything it was about introducing competition. To sane people, splitting BR up into 57 different varieties looked barney but we were reassured that it would expose inefficiencies and force the component parts to deal more competitively with one another. We were also assured that rail privatisation would not be another gravy train for bloated executives.

With one move Mr Souter has driven, well, a stagecoach through the Government's best intentions. The vertical integration that would result from the Stagecoach-Porterbrook deal strikes at the heart of the new structure put in place through privatisation. The overnight windfalls that have dropped in the laps of the Porterbrook management

put even the corporate excesses of the regional electricity companies in the shade.

The idea that any of those Porterbrook executives who mortgaged their houses to jump on board are now being rewarded for their risk taking is also fanciful. Inheriting a business where 80 per cent of the revenues are guaranteed for eight years is the kind of risk we would all love to take.

The Office of Passenger Rail Franchising and the rail regulator John Swift are not surprisingly building up a fair old head of steam about the way the bidding system for the remaining 12 franchises could be compromised. It is easy to see why if Stagecoach can, on the one hand, set the price for leasing out the rolling stock and on the other determine what it is worth bidding for in subsidies.

Mr Souter has already thought of that and is attempting to avoid being shunted off to the MMC with a series of undertakings. How easily they could be policed is another matter. A more effective safeguard might be to bar Stagecoach from bidding for any more rail franchises.

Cable has got itself in a twist

It is "all change" at the major cable companies, as yet another chief executive, this time Alan Michels of Telewest, gets the chop. What on earth is going on? The quick answer is that cable is in woeful shape: its pen-

etration rates are stuck in the mid 20 per cent range, its range of programming is either dire or bought in from market leader BSkyB, and its marketing and after-sales service record is, in a word, lousy. Some of this must be put down to the leadership, or lack of it. In the main, the (mostly) American executives parachuted in to run the cable industry here have been telecoms men, and technical types - better at digging up roads, laying cable and establishing switching networks than at selling CATV and telephony services to a consumer market they barely understand.

The new man at Bell Cablemedia, Dan Somers, puts customers front and centre in his new strategy. Likewise, Stephen Davidson, who is to take over from Mr Michels at Telewest, is a man who talks marketing, even if he, like the man he replaces, is a finance type, not strictly a salesman.

But with a new man at the top, at least Telewest can now get on with the task of making cable profitable in the UK. Once the networks are fully built out, and the information highway begins to develop more quickly in, the cable industry ought to benefit, even if heads roll in the meantime.

Troubled times for Euro-Sids

British Sid is not alone. His more sophisticated neighbours who invested in specialised investment trusts buying Euro-

pean privatisation stocks have also done badly, ending up with holdings which nobody wants in a sector which looks to be going nowhere.

The managers of Kepit, Kleinwort Benson's European Privatisation Trust, recognised the game was up a couple of weeks ago, and their £500m fund launched in 1994 was dead in the water, trading at a 13.8 per cent discount to its net asset value. A reconstruction package to try and persuade Kepit's 79,000 shareholders to switch into other more dynamic Kleinwort funds has not proved particularly successful.

But the smell of blood in the water has attracted predators keen to liquidate Kepit, and release the asset value. Yesterday Henderson Touche Remnant's European Growth Trust (Treg) offered holders of Kepit shares and warrants a choice between an eventual cash exit which Treg values at 93.86p and 28.16p respectively, or a switch into Treg, which invests in European smaller companies, a sector which is still performing. Treg is valued at only £170m but it trades at or above its asset value.

Kepit shares rose 2p to 91p and Treg shed 3p to 244p, but if the offer succeeds the Kepit portfolio will be liquidated and parcelled out. After costs Kepit shareholders can expect cash or Treg shares worth 5.5 per cent and warrant-holders 10.4 per cent above Tuesday's market price. Treg shareholders will get a 2.4 per cent uplift to asset values, as well as lower costs and increased

marketability for their enlarged fund. A clean kill could also trigger more attacks in a sector ripe for rationalisation.

More misery for the property have-nots

All the barometers of the housing market are pointing to an eventual recovery, but yesterday's repossession figures show that unsettled conditions still prevail. Although the first half of this year did not bring the increase that many commentators had feared, there was barely any decline from the second half of last year. About 50,000 families a year are still losing their homes. Between 750,000 and a million home owners have properties worth less than the size of their mortgage.

The start of a recovery in house prices, which is clearly under way, was always expected to allow lenders to repossess more properties as it became worth selling them. So the absence of any clear downward trend in the figures is not a surprise. However, they do emphasise the most serious problem hanging over the housing market. That is the concentration of misery among certain groups of people.

The fact that the housing market recovery is greater for the upper sectors of the market and more prosperous areas is only increasing the divisions between the property market haves and have-nots.

Royal quits high street and cuts 1,300 jobs

PETER RODGERS
Financial Editor

Royal & Sun Alliance, the insurance group, is closing all but five of its 94 high-street branches as part of an efficiency drive that will cost 1,300 jobs. The branches have been made redundant by the shift in the insurance industry towards direct sales by telephone.

The reductions are the first in a programme expected to reduce the UK insurance workforce by 4,000 in the wake of the £5.4bn merger just completed.



John Robins of GRE: Signs of a recovery in premiums

Of the job cuts, 300 will be at the branches - by the end of this year - and 500 will occur in each of the head offices in Liverpool and Horsham, West Sussex, over the next 18 months.

Before their merger, the two companies, Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance, had separately decided that the roles of the branches were "diminishing and becoming uneconomic". But they said that compulsory redundancies would be "kept to a minimum".

Industry sources said that Guardian Royal Exchange, a rival company, is also likely to cut

jobs. In a renewed efficiency programme, another 300 will go from its force of 6,000 UK staff. The company said it was not, however, planning involuntary redundancies.

Meanwhile, GRE expects to spend \$500m (£320m) on one or more likely two - US acquisitions in the next six months, according to John Robins, the chief executive. The company has been in talks with several potential targets.

Mr Robins said: "I hope to have something in the next six months. We have turned down two to three that did not meet our criteria." GRE is looking for a specialist insurer of higher risk drivers to add to its existing subsidiary in the US, and an agency broker in property and casualty insurance. Mr Robins cheered the UK stock market by reporting signs of a rates recovery in premiums, especially in the motor market. "I don't believe there is going to be a price war in household rates," he said. Household premiums have fallen 8 per cent in a year.

Following the creation of Royal & Sun Alliance, GRE itself has become the target of widespread takeover speculation, but Mr Robins said: "I don't believe in that sort of merger. You have to be able to manage the inevitable culture clashes of two companies that have been building similar businesses over 150 years, at a time of considerable industry strain and change." There had been no bid discussions over GRE, he added.

Meanwhile, Nationwide has switched its annual £100m business in buildings and contents insurance from a group that included GRE, to a cheaper alternative from ITT London & Edinburgh.

Investment Column, page 20

IN BRIEF

• Eurotunnel said the president of the Tribunal de Commerce in Paris had extended the mandate of debt mediators Lord Wakeham and Robert Badinter until 30 September. Eurotunnel's co-chairmen, Sir Alastair Morton and Patrick Ponsolle, said in a statement: "The negotiations with the steering group representing the banking syndicate have not developed as quickly as we would have wished. We are convinced that the way is open to a fair agreement, but our shareholders should not underestimate the difficulty and complexity of the issues to be resolved in obtaining a detailed restructuring plan, acceptable to all parties."

• Nigel Rudd, chairman of the Pilkington glass company, warned shareholders at the annual meeting that difficult trading conditions in the European market would result in first-half profits showing a fall compared with the same period last year.

• Around 28,000 farmers will receive shares worth an average of £6,000 as a result of the stock market flotation of Dairy Crest, the former marketing arm of the Milk Marketing Board. Dairy Crest shares were priced at 155p yesterday, valuing the company at £171m. Dealings start on 28 August.

• Birmingham Midshires Building Society increased half-year profits before tax from £28.6m to £34.3m. The society said all the signs were in place for a sustained recovery.

• David Brown Group said chairman Sir Terrence Harrison had relinquished his position on the board to concentrate on other business and private interests. Sid Taylor, a non-executive director of the company for the past three years, will act as chairman pending a further appointment.

• Glaxo shrugged off a 16 per cent decline in first-half sales for its biggest selling drug, Zantac, more than making up for the shortfall with better-than-expected revenues from new drugs launched in the past five years. Interim profits were boosted by the integration of last year's £97m acquisition of Wellcome, rising from £1.16bn to £1.55bn. Investment Column, page 20

BAT INDUSTRIES

Dividend up 8%

First half unaudited results to 30 June 1996

PRE-TAX PROFIT	£1,331m	+12%
EARNINGS PER SHARE	26.0p	+12%
DIVIDEND PER SHARE	10.0p	+8%

- Pre-tax profit rose by 12 per cent to £1,331 million, an underlying 8 per cent, excluding the effect of disposals.
- Financial services profit increased by 3 per cent to £554 million, with a reduced profit of £225 million from the life and investment business, and the general business 8 per cent higher at £329 million.
- Tobacco trading profit was up by 7 per cent, to £798 million, against last year's outstanding first half, even though there was a significant increase in brand development expenditure in a number of markets.
- B.A.T. Industries is continuing to make good progress. The Board is declaring an interim dividend of 10.0p, an 8 per cent increase, as part of our long-term commitment to deliver superior total returns for shareholders.

Lord Cairns, Chairman

The full interim report is being posted to shareholders and copies are available from the Company Secretary, B.A.T. Industries p.l.c., Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0NL.

business

Glaxo finds new life after Zantac

Reports of the early demise of Glaxo Wellcome have clearly been exaggerated. There is life after Zantac with a healthy new drug pipeline making up for declining sales of the best-selling ulcer treatment.

The Wellcome acquisition has bedded in nicely and the debts taken on to finance the £9bn deal last year are coming down at a good lick.

No surprise then that the shares jumped to an immediate premium on the announcement yesterday of better-than-expected first-half figures. Adjusting for the fact that Wellcome only came into the group half-way through the comparable period, which means the reported figures in our table are somewhat misleading, sales pushed ahead by 6 per cent and trading profit rose by 34 per cent. There was a highly encouraging rise in trading margin from 31 per cent to 39 per cent.

No surprise, either, however, that on reflection the market pushed the price all the way back down again as it focused on the long-term outlook for Glaxo. The company is in good shape, but what good news there is in the price and plenty of worries persist.

First and foremost of these is what will happen to Zantac sales once the all-important US patent expires next July. The 16 per cent decline thanks to competition in Germany does not augur well for a treatment that still accounts for almost a quarter of Glaxo's sales, even after the introduction of Wellcome products and after the undoubted success of the company's new product portfolio.

Glaxo reckons the £164m loss in sales from Zantac was more than twice made up by increased sales of "new products", those introduced since 1990, which added £327m during the half, a 51 per cent rise. Excluding Zantac, sales growth was 14 per cent at constant exchange rates.

Glaxo undoubtedly has strong positions in a range of important markets, including respiratory disease, which accounts for 22 per cent of total sales, migraine, where Imigran has become Glaxo's third-largest product, and Aids, where recent successful trial results suggest the company has a tight grip on what could be an enormous moneyspinner.

But Zantac is a big millstone around the group's neck, meaning that it will have to run extremely hard just to stand still. Lehman Brothers thinks the long-run growth rate in earnings per share will work out at no more than 8 per cent. Not bad for a £31bn company but hardly the stuff to set investment pulses racing.

On the basis of Lehman's forecast

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

GRE proves it can go it alone

GRE is scathing about suggestions that it needs a partner and on yesterday's half-year performance it gained some credibility. At least, unlike one of its recently merged peers, the company does not put out press releases in which the quotes are attributed jointly to the executive deputy chairman and the chief executive.

That quaint formula was in Royal & Sun Alliance's announcement of job cuts and management changes, and was ostensibly to reassure the two lots of staff in the merged companies that all their interests were being looked after. It is hardly a good omen for a smooth integration of the two groups and GRE is arguably better off on its own.

The trading profit before investment gains at £137m was down £42m compared with a year ago. Given the wars in motor business that was a reasonable performance and significantly better than forecast.

With investment gains down £45m to £103m, pre-tax profits fell to £231m from £327m, while the interim dividend rose 9.7 per cent to 3.4p a share.

GRE has done a good job of maintaining margins in the UK and Germany during fierce competition. The loss of the Nationwide household account for next year is actually a positive sign at this stage of the cycle - when rates are low and the risk of a new phase of the price war is high - because GRE refused to bid below its minimum rate of return of 12 per cent.

Though it was late into direct selling, GRE is investing heavily and has increased the renewal rate by existing customers since it took over RAC Insurance Services.

John Robins, chief executive, is also putting in proper chief executives to run the three main sectors. So though Royal & Sun Alliance has plenty of scope for cost savings, it will be hard work and,

in the meantime, GRE will benefit from the freedom to keep its eye on the ball.

Having decided doggedly to continue with its small life business, GRE is also about to add £200m to net asset value with a switch at the end of the year to embedded value accounting. The share price this year has lagged too far behind Royal and General Accident. Good value.

Dairy Crest sets price for float

Dairy Crest, the former marketing arm of the Milk Marketing Board, looks set for a successful stock market flotation, two years after its first attempt was disrupted by the Government's de-regulation of the milk market.

The volatility this time around is not so much in the milk market as the stock market, which has caused Dairy Crest's advisers to price the issue slightly lower than expectations. At a price of 155p the company is valued at £171m. Thirty per cent of the stock was placed with institutions yesterday with the remainder being given to the 28,000 farmers who jointly owned the company through the Residual Milk Marketing Board. On average they will pocket £6,000 from the float.

Though dealings in the shares are not expected to start until 28 August, an internal market has been set up to enable farmers to trade their shares ahead of that deadline to avoid disorderly selling and buying by the farmer-shareholders.

At 155p, Dairy Crest shares are certainly priced competitively. They are on a price/earnings ratio of eight, while rivals Unigate and Northern Foods both trade on 11 with a less attractive yield. This makes Dairy Crest a good bet and at these levels it is hardly surprising that institutions appear to have fallen over themselves to grab a slice.

Dairy Crest has done much in recent years to slim itself down from a bloated co-operative but it remains Britain's third-largest dairy company. Going forward it will need to concentrate more on building higher-margin brands like its successful Clover spread and its young but growing Frijol range of milk drinks while reducing its dependency on commodity items such as liquid milk.

The company's operating profits of £35.2m last year on sales of £740m show there is plenty of scope for more margin improvement to come. Good value.

Cable firm rings the changes on phone boxes

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

Good news for fans of the traditional red telephone boxes which were abolished by BT: they're coming back. Except this time they'll be green.

The Telewest TV-cable company is scouring the world to buy up any remaining boxes so that they can bring them back to the UK and paint them in Telewest's corporate green.

The green-fied booths will be set up as a marketing tool wherever Telewest has a concentration of cable users. You will even be able to make real phone calls from them - using the cable network.

Ian Hood, director of corporate communications at Telewest is coy about the scheme: "We are looking for opportunities to promote the brand. It's no secret that our new corporate colours are green. Beyond that, I couldn't possibly comment."

In other words, it's true. So how does BT feel about it?

Howard Hodgson, the long-haired former funeral director and self-styled "flamboyant millionaire" Ronson chief executive, was even more immaculately coiffured than usual yesterday.

Just as well, since he was previewing Ronson's first range of men's fashion accessories. Ronson is using its centenary year to attempt to emulate Dunhill and expand beyond the traditional base, in Ronson's case cigarette lighters.

Dermot Reeve, the retired captain of Warwickshire County Cricket Club and good friend of Mr Hodgson's, was also on hand at the breakfast preview in London to



Turning green: Telewest's boxes might look something like this

hymn the three new ranges. These will include shavers, sunglasses, old-fashioned ball point pens, Italian cufflinks and the like. Oh, and lighters.

Lloyd's of London has just sent out 46.7 tons of mail to its 34,000 members, so it's just as well the next postal strike isn't due until next Tuesday.

The troubled Lime Street insurance market has posted out its definitive "Reconstruction and Renewal Settlement Offer", which members must OK if it is to survive and prosper.

Lloyd's has devoted 40 staff specifically to handle the mailing, which consists of over 16 million A4 pages of print. A Lloyd's spokesman is reluctant to be drawn on the costs of the project, not least because the precise costs are not yet known. "I'm waiting for the invoices," he says.

Any UK investment bank with pretensions to rival the American "bulge bracket" giants knows that at some point it has to gain a US presence. A similar problem faces British law firms that want to compete globally in the highly lucrative securities area. Good news then that City solicitors Freshfields has managed to poach Tom Joyce, an American securities specialist with 24 years' experience at New York law firm Shearman & Sterling. Mr Joyce has already spent 10 years in London and will be building a small US securities law team for Freshfields to support its capital markets practice.

You can understand why David Rowland, chairman of Lloyd's, doesn't want to revise the offer again, despite threats of legal action by some names groups. The cost of another mailing could really send Lloyd's beneath the waves.

Rob Meakin is well qualified for his new job as director of human resources at British Gas Energy. One of Mr Meakin's biggest previous jobs was at British Leyland in the infamous 1970s.

It was during these years that the many "Spanish flagships" at Leyland plant reached their nadir. Sir John Red Robbo, the Marina and Allegro represent some of the most depressing days of British industrial decline.

Mr Meakin, 46, joined British Leyland/Rover in 1973. Since then he has concentrated on "helping to rejuvenate businesses and transforming them into highly focused services and providers with a strong emphasis on customer satisfaction."

Having started out at Leyland, he will know what British Gas Energy should avoid. And he could be useful at dealing with complaints too.

Colorvision calls in receivers

NIGEL COPE

Colorvision, the troubled Liverpool-based television and video retailer whose management slogan was "tizzy whizzy let's get busy", collapsed into receivership yesterday threatening 74 shops and 800 jobs.

The company blamed poor trading and the effects of the Office of Fair Trading decision last May that it was "minded to revoke" Colorvision's credit licences following customers' complaints.

Colorvision has debts of £1.5m and was expected to record a loss including exceptional items of £4m this year compared with a £1m profit in 1995.

Colorvision shares were suspended yesterday afternoon pending clarification of the company's financial position.

The announcement that it had called in Arthur Andersen as administrative receivers followed soon afterwards. The board said it had taken the decision "in view of the company's current and anticipated trading

levels together with its worsening cash flow position."

Colorvision is the latest in a long line of electrical retailers to be laid low by the cut throat market. In the last few months both Escom and Powerstore have also called in the receivers.

Colorvision has been in dire straits since the OFT issued its "minded to revoke" notice. In May it called in new management led by executive chairman Sir Brian Wolfson. They cut costs which included some shop closures and redundancies.

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BALANCE	ANNUAL INTEREST GROSS P.A.	MONTHLY INTEREST GROSS P.A.
HALIFAX INTERNATIONAL MANX PREMIUM		
£100,000+	5.85%	5.70%
£50,000+	5.80%	5.65%
£25,000+	5.60%	5.46%
£10,000+	5.20%	5.08%
HALIFAX INTERNATIONAL MANX GOLD		
£100,000+	5.65%	5.51%
£50,000+	5.50%	5.37%
£25,000+	5.25%	5.13%
£10,000+	5.00%	4.89%
£5,000+	4.50%	4.41%
£500+	3.50%	3.45%
£10+	2.50%	2.47%

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1ST AUGUST 1996

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Relying on science: Lord Cairns says the climate of opinion in the US remains extremely hostile

BAT beefs up financial arm for faster growth

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

BAT yesterday promised faster-than-expected growth in its financial services businesses after the consolidation of its asset management, general and life insurance operations into one division.

Sandy Leitch, chief executive of the newly formed British American Financial Services arm, said the division had targeted an extra 20 per cent growth above previous expectations over the next five years.

Bafis, which brings together Eagle Star, Allied Dunbar and Threadneedle Asset Management, was created recently to give the financial operations greater coherence and to create cost-cutting opportunities. It is estimated share computer and other support services could save Bafis £50m a year.

The consolidation is also expected to help the division tar-

get overseas markets. "To become a world-beater we must succeed beyond the white cliffs of Dover. Asia will be a top development priority," Mr Leitch said.

Bafis already has a presence in Hong Kong and Taiwan and expects to be granted licenses in India and China within the next two years.

The need to expand overseas was underlined by interim figures showing a reduction in life and investment profits offsetting better general insurance returns. Eagle Star's first-half profit slipped to £108m (£113m) while Allied Dunbar's profits fell 9 per cent to £96m.

Those poor results could not prevent a 12 per cent rise in group pre-tax profits to £1.33bn for the six months to June as one-off business disposals, recovery in US insurance and steady growth in cigarette sales, especially in Asia, made up for the disappointments in UK

financial services. In the US, higher selling prices offset lower volumes of cigarettes, while the continuing increase in smoking in the Far East saw profits there rise 14 per cent. BAT accounts for almost a quarter of all foreign cigarettes sold in Japan.

Commenting on a recent upsurge in anti-tobacco industry litigation, Lord Cairns, chairman, said: "Despite the tobacco industry's attempt to get science back into the debate, the climate of opinion remains extremely hostile in the US ahead of the presidential election."

He claimed three important legal victories, however, in the long-running feud between the anti-smoking lobby and the tobacco giants - a class action against the company in the US, a Medicaid reimbursement dispute in Florida, and in the UK the refusal of the Legal Aid Board to grant funding to litigants in tobacco cases.

Tough price curbs knock NI Electricity

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

A much tougher than expected price regime for Northern Ireland Electricity was unveiled by the regulator yesterday, promising a £40 cut in bills for consumers, but sending the share price plunging by 13 per cent.

The shares dropped 53p to 353p. And the company will face an investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC) unless it agrees to the price formula by the end of

this month. The five-year price cap proposed by the regulator, Offer (NIE), would slash Northern Ireland Electricity's income from the core electricity transmission, distribution and supply business by 30 per cent from next April, reducing revenues by more than £60m. In addition, prices could rise by no more than inflation minus 2 per cent.

The formula translates into a cut of £40 off bills of £330, in Northern Ireland. The average bill in England and Wales is £270. NIE argues that it is

being unfairly penalised, given 60 per cent of household bills go to pay four privately-run generators. Offer (NIE) has already threatened to take the generators to the MMC.

The regulator argued that the current price-cap, which allows bills to rise by inflation plus 3.5 per cent, was too generous. Last year NIE profits surged by 23 per cent to £107m, compared with £75m between 1993 and 1994, the first year for the company on the stock market.

Charles Coulthard, the

deputy director general of Offer (NIE) said: "They can either say 'no' and it will be the MMC, or 'yes', in which case we get on with the price controls. We consider the existing price controls totally inappropriate. If they disagree, we are duty bound to them to the MMC."

Mr Coulthard insisted that the new price cap would still allow sufficient cash to enable the company to increase dividends by more than inflation.

Dr Patrick Haren, the chief executive of NIE, said that

investment would have to fall by about £7m a year, which would damage customer service. He said a final decision on whether to risk an MMC referral would be taken in a few weeks. "At the end of the day, a company doesn't set itself up to manage MMC referrals," he said.

Scottish Power, meanwhile, has lost a High Court challenge against Offer as to whether or not its price controls should use the same formula as that applying to Scottish Hydro. The firm is considering an appeal.

Highbury brought to book

CHRIS GODSMARK

New management grappling to rescue Highbury House, the troubled specialist publisher, were involved in an acrimonious confrontation with the firm's former managing director and founder at the annual general meeting yesterday.

It was the first time Kevin Harrington, who built up the business under the name Harrington Kibridge as a 17-year-old, had come face to face with the board since he resigned last year. Mr Harrington still owns

12 per cent of the shares after a life-or-death refinancing last September by the new chief executive, Ian Fletcher.

Waving a copy of the Cadbury code on corporate governance, Mr Harrington accused the board of conflicts of interest stemming from a magazine contract Highbury had secured with Mr Fletcher's private business empire.

The former head of the company repeatedly cross-examined the board on why this information had not been disclosed in the annual report.

In a frank exchange of views,

Mr Fletcher attacked his predecessor's business record, charging him with "extravagance".

Harrington Kibridge served up double-digit growth in the early Nineties, but two years ago, told stunned investors a £2m profit was being restated in the accounts as a loss. The shares traded today at 19p, down from 219p in a rights issue in 1993.

Highbury lost £2.7m last year on sales of £12m, but the management, which has been supported by most shareholders, said the situation was gradually improving.

1521 من الالصل

The way to save our industries from the museum

In a dank hamlet clinging to the side of the Rosendale valley in the heart of Lancashire stands a monument to the county's once mighty cotton industry. The Helmsore Textile Museum is a working mill. The spinning equipment there, made nearly in 1903, was taken direct from surrounding mills when they closed, direct from manufacturing to museum.

It would be hard to find a more fitting symbol of the penalties investment has paid for its lack of capital investment in the cotton industry in Manchester and its environs thought to have reached £20m, equivalent to about £1bn today. Waves of new technology triggered additional expenditure but by the 1930s the basic technology in use had stopped changing. When the mills closed in the 1970s much of the machinery in use was about a century old. Yet further technological upgrades might have saved the industry from destruction by cheap foreign competition. Two decades ago it was still labour-intensive business producing pretty much commodity items - its standardisation ironically encouraged by government grants for certain types of equipment in the 1940s.

Although wages were low compared with the rest of manufacturing, the industry could not compete with low-cost competitors in southern Europe and the Far East. Investment in new technology might have allowed the industry to survive and grow, even though the traditional jobs would still have disappeared.

There are other British industries that have survived only because foreign owners have made the necessary investments. The car industry is one, consumer electronics another.



ECONOMIC VIEW
DIANE COYLE

Japanese and Korean companies have seen investment opportunities where British owners have not.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the Labour Party has identified investment - in human as well as physical capital - as the key issue for the country's long-term growth prospects. On the face of it, the figures are pretty damning and it is natural to suppose they have something to do with the weaknesses of Britain's economic performance. As the table shows, average UK investment growth, whether total investment or business investment, has lagged behind the average in other industrial countries.

Labour's emphasis on the importance of investment has been criticised by the chief economist at City investment bank UBS, Bill Martin. Mr Martin argues that the idea that higher investment can permanently raise the rate of growth, ignores the fact of diminishing returns to capital. Empirical research tends to support the conventional economic assumption that the rate of return on investment will fall the more of it there is. In these circumstances, higher investment will boost output

growth only temporarily - very welcome, especially as what is temporary in real life, but not a panacea for the nation's economic ills.

The clash between this dismal conclusion from conventional economic theory and New Labour's common-sense instinct that investment matters, can be resolved by acknowledging that it is not just extra investment, but the efficiency with which it is used that explains economic performance.

In industry, more efficient ways of using capital and labour are likely to be embodied in new equipment. It is much easier for managers to alter working practices by introducing a new machine than to march to the shop floor and tell everyone to start doing everything differently.

Economist Nick Crafts has concluded that the UK's relatively poor economic performance in the 1960s and 1970s was due to inefficiency. In a recent study he wrote: "The earlier failures had their roots in British institutions, and the Thatcherites were given an unusual political window of opportunity to attack them."

He has concluded, though, that

there are still big question marks hanging over the efficiency and technological capability of British industry, despite the Thatcherite attack on unions and workplace inflexibility. This is a conclusion that also has a clear appeal for Labour, although it would focus on a different set of institutional failures.

Labour has turned the spotlight on the inefficiencies of the UK's capital markets in financing industry - and rightly. Many business people will privately agree that their institutional shareholders take a short-term view, and that they would prefer to pay out less in dividends, although most also think it is important so long as they retain enough profits to finance those investments they think are needed.

Politicians across the spectrum also agree on the failure of the education system to deliver a good education to the majority of children. Most Britons start their working lives with low basic skills, a high level of boredom and little motivation and it is downhill from there. As Sir John Harvey-Jones has observed, they have energy and creativity but these qualities are spent on building a makeshift model of the Taj Mahal or dreaming that the pop group they have formed will be the next Oasis.

It is, of course, even harder to improve efficiency than it is to increase the level of investment. It is Japanese inward investment that brought new practices such as just-in-time and team-working to great swathes of British industry. Investment in new techniques is likely to be the only alternative for UK companies.

For the cotton industry, which survives mainly in specialised and high-quality niches, it is too late. It might be too late for other chunks of

manufacturing, too. Ten miles down the valley from the Helmsore museum lies Chadwick's, Britain's last producer of plastic drinking straws, among other things.

The plant has the most up-to-date machinery there is for making straws, having made much of the workforce redundant during the past decade and a half. The business is still struggling against Chinese competition, which is far less technically advanced, very labour intensive and very low cost. Perhaps the lesson is that an advanced industrial country should not cling to the low-tech end of manufacturing at all. There is nothing technically sophisticated about small plastic tubes, no matter how impressive the machines that make them.

For the rest of manufacturing, however, survival will depend on investing in new technology and finding new ways of working with it. It is the countries that have been at the forefront of using computer technology in manufacturing - the US and Japan - which have the best economy-wide employment performance in the industrialised world. It is becoming painfully clear to other countries that it is better to invest in new technology yourself than to import the fruits of it from overseas.

Industrialists, as much as their workforce, dislike the fact that technical progress puts people out of work. But the choice is not between carrying on as before and investing in new equipment that will put many people out of a job; it is a choice between the disappearance of all the jobs and the loss of some. After all, the textiles industry was once of the most technically advanced industries anywhere in the world, as the museums poignantly remind us.



Twilight zone: A cotton worker in Wigan in the 1950s. New technology might have rescued the industry. Photograph: Hulton Getty

Gross investment as % of GDP					
	UK	19 countries	UK	19 countries	
1961-73	18.7	21.3	8.5	11.7	
1980-1995	17.6	20.8	11.0	12.8	
Annual averages					
Source: IBS					

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
US	1.5571	5.3	6.3	10.00	
Canada	2.1400	7.1	5.0	13.84	
Germany	2.2893	48.41	40.30	147.28	28.24
France	7.7819	43.18	39.54	43.97	74.86
Italy	2.0612	48.43	142.90	52.01	44.91
Japan	163.78	75.70	225.28	103.72	45.44
ECU	1.2164	11.11	45.40	12.70	7.4
Belgium	47.287	12.7	32.25	30.375	6.5
Denmark	8.6634	59.18	448.23	58.923	85.85
Netherlands	26.579	55.57	107.18	105.50	270.220
Ireland	0.8678	7.3	21.41	4.7	10.94
Norway	10.8120	20.30	30.60	3.693	42.17
Spain	165.72	31.41	68.86	125.69	23.27
Sweden	10.289	0.8	1.9	8.6079	3.22
Switzerland	1.6838	54.48	105.32	18.70	37.34
Australia	2.0448	20.31	67.45	12.58	19.31
Hong Kong	12.042	101.61	224.47	101.61	54.58
Malaysia	3.8353	0	0	2.6855	4.14
New Zealand	2.2582	43.57	133.55	14.01	30.32
Saudi Arabia	5.5359	0	0	3.7505	2.7
Singapore	2.2204	0	0	1.431	41.30

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	Dollar
Argentina	13.557	10.357
Australia	1.5571	10.357
China	15.738	10.357
France	7.7819	10.357
Germany	2.2893	10.357
India	53.559	10.357
Japan	163.78	10.357
South Africa	7.7819	10.357
UK	1.5571	10.357

Forward rates quoted low to high are at a discount; high to low are at a premium. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 323 033. Cable cost 30p per minute (cheap rate) 40p other times.

Interest Rates

Country	Base	5 years	10 years	15 years	20 years
UK	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
France	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Germany	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Italy	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Japan	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%

Bond Yields

Country	1 year	2 year	3 year	4 year	5 year
UK	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%
France	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%
Germany	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%
Italy	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%
Japan	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%

Money Market Rates

Country	Overnight	7 day	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
France	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Germany	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Italy	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Japan	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%

Tourist Rates

Country	1 Euro	2 Euros	5 Euros	10 Euros	20 Euros
UK	1.5571	3.1142	7.7819	15.5638	31.1276
France	7.7819	15.5638	31.1276	62.2552	124.5104
Germany	2.2893	4.5786	9.1572	18.3144	36.6288
Italy	2.0612	4.1224	8.2448	16.4896	32.9792
Japan	163.78	327.56	655.12	1310.24	2620.48

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Call	10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357
Short Call	10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357
Long Put	10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357
Short Put	10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357

Life FT-SE Index Option

Settlement	Settlement	Settlement	Settlement	Settlement
10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357
10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357
10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357
10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357	10.357

Commodity Indices

Index	Value	Change
Oil	10.357	0.000
Gold	10.357	0.000
Silver	10.357	0.000
Copper	10.357	0.000

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit	Price	Change
Unit 1	10.357	0.000
Unit 2	10.357	0.000
Unit 3	10.357	0.000
Unit 4	10.357	0.000

Industrial Metals

Commodity	Price	Change
Aluminum	10.357	0.000
Copper	10.357	0.000
Gold	10.357	0.000
Iron	10.357	0.000

Precious Metals

Commodity	Price	Change
Gold	10.357	0.000
Silver	10.357	0.000
Palladium	10.357	0.000
Platinum	10.357	0.000

Other Softs

Commodity	Price	Change
Wheat	10.357	0.000
Corn	10.357	0.000
Soybeans	10.357	0.000
Cotton	10.357	0.000

Key to Dividends

Symbol	Meaning
d	in dividend
c	change when units sold
x	formerly 'x'
Non	Non recognised funds

More extensive list of Unit Trusts and Managed Funds, ranked by performance with other sectors and including other prices, is published in Saturday editions of the Independent.

...eaver

■ **First Choice**, Britain's third-biggest tour operator, has finally reached a distribution deal with Lunn Poly, the country's largest travel agent with 797 outlets.

The three-year agreement covers First Choice's next season's winter and summer brochures. Shares in First Choice have been poor performers since recent interim results disappointed, but they closed 2p higher yesterday at 60p.

■ **Card Clear**, a supplier of card payment and fraud prevention services, ticked 2p higher to 34p.

The AIM-listed company has entered into a joint venture agreement with Mastercard, a retail foreign exchange bureau, to provide systems to protect against fraud in credit card transactions involving UK cheques and electronic payment cards.

PATRICK TOOHER

Choice have been poor performers since recent interim results disappointed, but they closed 2p higher yesterday at 60p.

☐ Card Clear, a supplier of card payment and fraud prevention services, ticked 2p higher to 34p.

The AIM-listed company has entered into a joint venture agreement with MasterCard, a retail foreign exchange bureau, to provide systems to protect against fraudulent transactions involving UK cheques and plastic payment cards.

1998				1998			
High	Low	Stock	Index	High	Low	Stock	Index
Price	Chg	Yld	FINCode	Price	Chg	Yld	FINCode

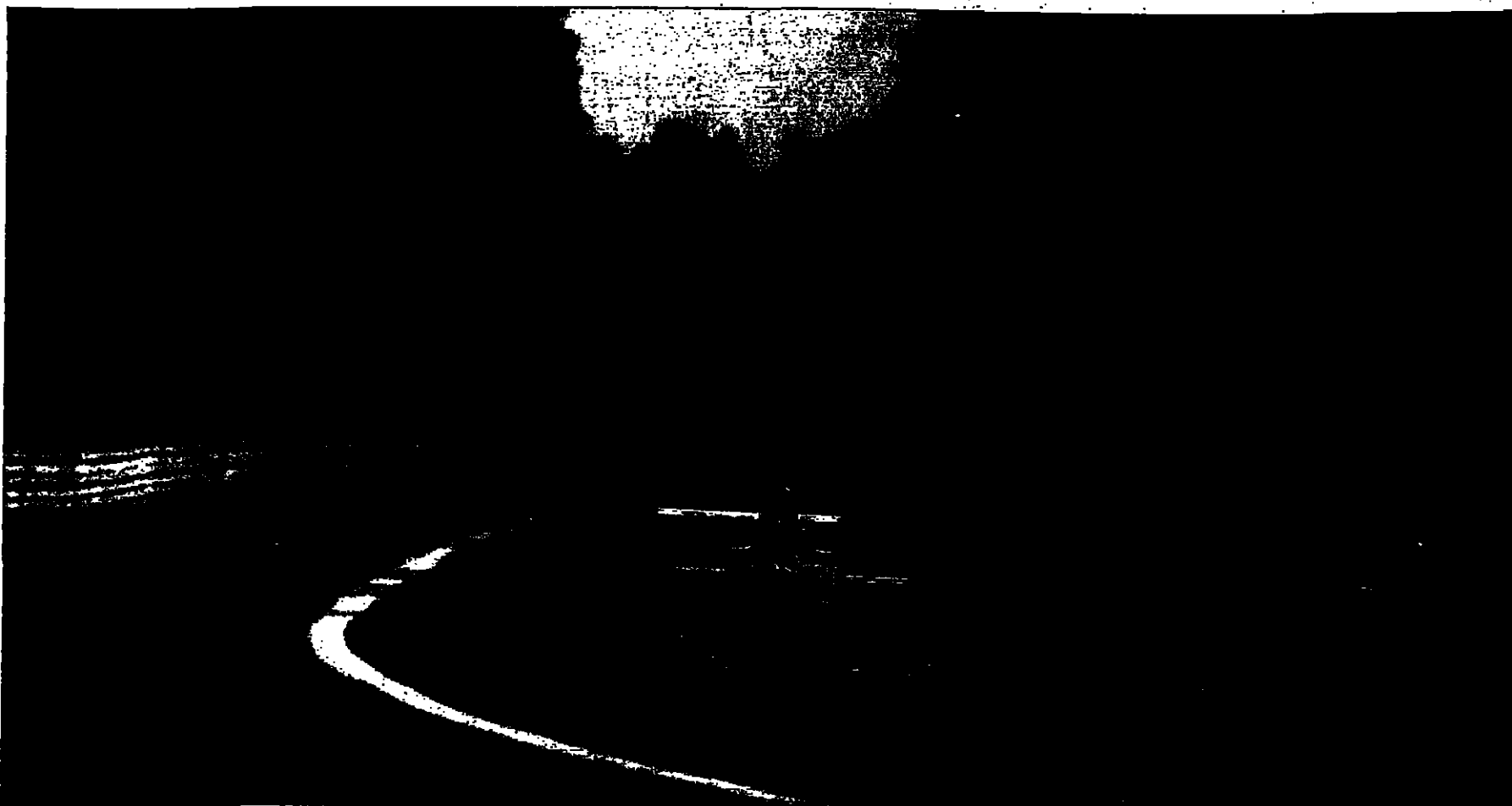
هكذا من الراحل

sport

F1
RACING

THE INDEPENDENT

FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



Damon Hill winning pole position in the German Grand Prix

Photograph: EMPICS

Grand Prix Shopping List

POINTS SCORED

DRIVERS	POINTS	DRIVERS	POINTS
1 M Schumacher	14	131	
2 J Alesi	22	140	
3 D Hill	34	258	
4 G Berger	7	94	
5 D Coulthard	19	118	
6 E Irvine	0	42	
7 J Villeneuve	17	210	
8 M Hakkinen	2	125	
9 H H Frenzen	10	61	
10 M Brundle	0	52	
11 R Barrichello	14	82	
12 J Herbert	-1	50	
13 M Salo	6	63	
14 P Lamy	6	31	
15 P Dintz	-2	55	
16 U Katayama	-3	-1	
17 J Verstappen	-5	4	
18 O Panis	5	81	
19 L Badoer	0	-6	
20 R Rosset	8	19	
21 A Montemini	0	-7	
22 G Fischella	0	7	
23 V Sospin	0	0	
24 T Marques	0	-5	
25 F Lagorce	0	0	
26 H Noda	0	0	
27 T Inoue	0	0	
28 M Blundell	0	0	
29 J-C Bouillon	0	0	
30 K Brack	0	0	
31 K Burt	0	0	
32 E Collard	0	0	
33 N Fontana	0	0	
34 D Franchitti	0	0	
35 N Larini	0	0	
36 J Magnussen	0	0	
37 A Prost	0	0	
38 G Tarquini	0	0	
39 K Wendlinger	0	0	

GRAND PRIX '96 RACE SCHEDULE

Hungarian GP
August 11
Belgian GP
August 25
Italian GP
September 8
Portuguese GP
September 22
Japanese GP
October 13

Team
Position
Check Line:
0891 891
806

Results &
Top 50
Teams:
0891 891
807

Calls cost 39p per
minute cheap rate,
49p per minute at all
other times.
Rules are as
previously published
and are available on
request.



The latest scores and results

At last – a real race. After the high speed procession that was Silverstone, last Sunday's German Grand Prix at Hockenheim was the ideal antidote, a slipstreaming thriller that was a throwback to the days before wings and chicanes strangled racing. There is no doubt at all who the hero of the day was – see the Driver of the Day box for a full eulogy – but we should also show our appreciation to Damon Hill for making such a Horlicks of his start and giving himself so much work to do later in the race. Hill is making something of a speciality of bogging down when the lights go out and needs to do some work to sort the problem out. There is absolutely no point in producing a heroic "Banzai" lap in Saturday qualifying – as Hill did at Hockenheim – if you are then

going to sit on the grid and wave half the field past before you set off in pursuit. For all of which whingeing, Hill once again came up with a bucketload of points for his Dream Team managers. The only category he failed to score in was "most improved", but then while he is taking all the pole positions he is always going to have a tough time improving on first place. Aside from the regular top scorers, Heinz-Harald Frenzen put in a useful run to finish with ten points, including five for the fastest pit-stop. As the F1 silly season gets underway, Frenzen is being talked about as a replacement for Hill at Williams next season. But the German has had a lousy year with Sauber, fighting a lack of power from their Ford engine and occasionally being shown up by

DRIVER OF THE DAY: GERHARD BERGER

What a performance – and what desperately bad luck. Gerhard Berger drove one of the races of his long career on Sunday, and was within a few miles of a famous victory when his Renault engine let go without warning. So he was left with no reward at all for starting in the race and serving notice to Damon Hill that his long period of dominance may be at an end. Berger has taken his time to settle in at Benetton following his long stint with Ferrari, but all the signs are now that the lanky Austrian has got the car working the way he wants it. He used all the – legitimate – tricks in



the book to keep Hill behind him at Hockenheim, and for all his protestations it would have been surprising if Hill had pulled off a clean pass. Berger is the most experienced of the current grand prix drivers, and given the similarity in top speed of the Renault-powered Williams and Benetton, he had plenty of defensive options available. And it was typical that he was generous and optimistic in defeat, for Berger, one of the funniest men in motor racing as well as one of the wisest, knows that what goes around comes around, and with a little luck his day will come again.

his British team-mate Johnny Herbert. He will have been determined to do well in front of his home crowd last weekend, and with a little more luck might have made it into the points proper.

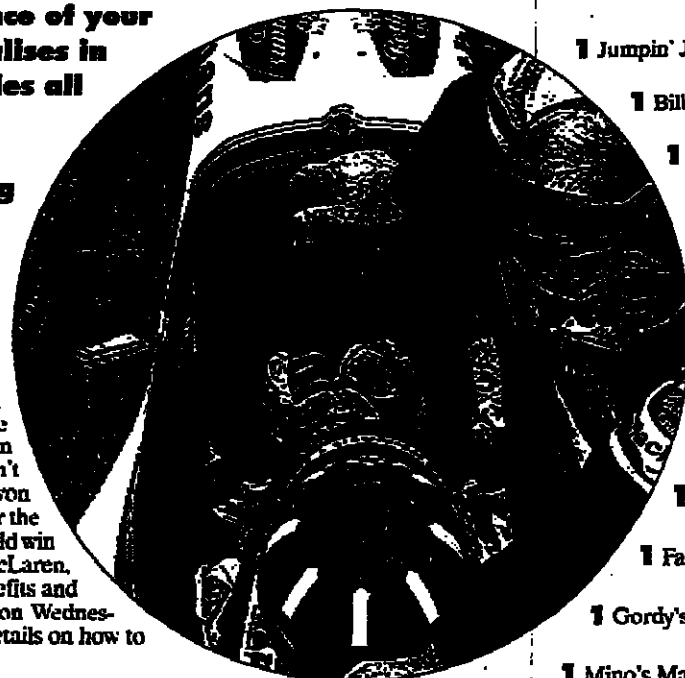
Ricardo Rosset put in a steady run to gather eight points for Arrows, but any Dream Team manager with Arrows chassis will have been very displeased with his team-mate Jos Verstappen, who dumped it in

the dirt early for a minus score. Verstappen's reputation as a "coming man" has been tarnished by some distinctly dodgy driving over the last few races; he needs to clean up his act.

WIN a drive in a grand prix car

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize – a drive in a 650bhp F1 car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.



INDIVIDUAL GRAND PRIX PRIZES STILL TO BE WON

You can enter our Formula 1 Dream Team game at any time during the grand prix season. Even if you don't win our top prize, don't worry, there are still prizes to be won with each grand prix race. Enter for the Hungarian Grand Prix and you could win exclusive membership to Team McLaren, which offers a host of unique benefits and privileges. Get The Independent on Wednesday 7 or Thursday 8 August for details on how to register.

GERMAN GRAND PRIX PRIZE WINNER

Congratulations to Diane Sullivan from London and her team Do or Die. She has won a trip for two to the Belgian Grand Prix.

Overall Top 50 Dream Teams

Thirty-five teams are in joint 1st position with 456 points and fifteen teams are in joint 2nd position with 453 points

1 Jumpin' Jacks

1 Bilbie Racing

1 Maddisons

1 Crisp One

1 The Forty

1 One's

1 Elfletha

1 Geezeal

1 Equinox

1 Farrahs

1 Gordy's GLs

1 Mino's Marauders

1 Herb's Flyers

1 Dan's Reckless Racers

1 Sinckley Formula 1

1 Peanjuree

1 The Dare Devils

1 Dream Machines

1 Harvey

1 God's Son

1 Bisland's Bangers

1 I'm Alright Jacques

1 Bino One

1 They Who Dare

1 Charlie's Choice

1 DSC

1 Petrol Heads

1 Ward's Wonders

1 Bourbon

1 Red Rose Racing

1 Formula Fantastic

1 Players One

1 A K Racing Team A

1 Speed Buggy

1 Drive Blind

1 Used Rubber

2 The 7 Percenters

2 Follow Me Please Racing

2 Drack

2 Hill's Decline

2 Stagnant 3

2 Smith Sizzlers

2 Emily Zoom

2 Track Suit Racing UK

2 Eagle Racing

2 Skidlids

2 Team Shambles

2 Overdrive

2 Diesel Dreamers

2 Vernotti Racing

2 Jack Burchell Ford

CHASSIS

CHASSIS	POINTS	CHASSIS	POINTS
40 Benetton	16	140	
41 Williams	20	192	
42 Ferrari	14	99	
43 McLaren	9	131	
44 Sauber	-1	54	
45 Jordan	12	79	
46 Ligier	9	80	
47 Tyrrell	-3	41	
48 Arrows	-5	-21	
49 Minardi	0	-13	
50 Forti	0	-12	

ENGINES

ENGINES	POINTS	ENGINES	POINTS
51 Renault	20	196	
52 Ferrari	16	126	
53 Mercedes	14	157	
54 Peugeot	13	97	
55 Mugen	12	117	
56 Ford V10	11	93	
57 Yamaha	0	64	
58 Hart	0	24	
59 Ford Zetec V8	0	0	
60 Ford ED V8	0	34	

Join over 29,000 readers who are playing Formula 1 Dream Team

Acfield advocates rest for top players

Cricket

ADAM SZRETER

The first instalment of the Acfield Report into the state of English cricket, published yesterday, added a little fuel to a small fire that promises one day to catch light in spectacular fashion. But the message to anyone waiting for radical changes after England's dog's dinner of a winter is: don't hold your breath.

The working party appointed by the Test and County Cricket Board in March and headed by David Acfield, the chairman of the TCCB's cricket committee, gave its support to the principle of allowing the chairman of selectors to relieve any England player from county duty if it felt the player is in need of a rest prior to a Test match.

This is an endorsement of the views of the current chairman of selectors, Raymond Illingworth, although as he is standing down this autumn that is neither here nor there. Of far greater relevance is the views of the counties themselves, and at the moment it is hard to imagine many of them agreeing to the further absence of players who already miss a large chunk of their season. They, after all, are the players whom the members pay their money to watch.

Acfield's working party, which includes the Lancashire chairman, Bob Bennett, and the former England captain David Gower and Mike Gatting, have compiled their report from questionnaires to leading figures in the sport including the county chairmen, Test umpires and members of the England Test squad. But Acfield himself admitted: "The counties have already expressed their resistance when the cricket committee suggested the same thing."

"They would prefer to keep it

worth, although as he is standing down this autumn that is neither here nor there. Of far greater relevance is the views of the counties themselves, and at the moment it is hard to imagine many of them agreeing to the further absence of players who already miss a large chunk of their season. They, after all, are the players whom the members pay their money to watch.

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"They would prefer to keep it

as a gentleman's agreement. I think it is easier and simpler and neater just to have one person with the right to say it but obviously that very much depends on the chairman of cricket using that power sparingly and sensibly."

Bennett, whose job at Lancashire would seem to be at odds with the report's primary recommendation, said: "Whether the chairman of selectors should have the veto over players will be one of the more controversial topics when it comes under discussion with the TCCB."

"It's unlikely to happen very often that the chairman would withdraw a batsman for example. You can understand the case of Michael Atherton because he has the extra pressures of captaincy but in the main I would have thought it would apply to the quicker bowlers."

The report claims that members of the England squad have played an average of 152 days competitive cricket a year, compared to Australia's 100, and recommends top players be given rest before and after the domestic season and, if necessary, during the course of the season.

The working party also recommends that the present England hierarchy — with a captain, coach and chairman of selectors — be kept rather than revert to the supreme role which Illingworth held until this summer.

They do not advocate the coach sitting on the selection panel, instead suggesting a four-strong team of the chairman, the captain and two other selectors choosing Test squads.

The working party, which will be followed by another this winter looking into the structure of English cricket, advocates a streamlining of the management and administration of the national team.

They suggest the institution of an "England Management Committee" split into three sub-committees with responsibility for the selection of England and England A, the development of excellence and England youth teams and "International affairs", whatever that means.



Alan Shearer, the world's first £15m footballer, joins his Newcastle team-mates for the first time in Singapore yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

Arsenal only had eyes for Shearer

Football

ANDREW MARTIN

Bruce Rioch has indicated that Arsenal's conspicuous absence from the summer's spiral of spending was to devote all their funds to buying a single player — Alan Shearer.

Rioch, who has yet to sign a contract at Highbury despite being appointed Arsenal manager more than 13 months ago, is thought to feel stymied by the club's player-buying policy.

Rioch told *Gazette* magazine that "a top player who might be about to leave his club" had been targeted by the Highbury

directors, who are responsible for buying players that the manager has selected. "It was no good us then spending £3m here, £3m there, because that would erode the money we needed for this one," Rioch said.

The interview was, of course, conducted before the weekend when it became clear that Shearer was moving to Newcastle for a record £15m. Shearer's name is not mentioned, but there can be little doubt that the England striker is the player Rioch is alluding to.

Shearer, meanwhile, joined his Newcastle team-mates for the first time yesterday for a light

training session in Singapore where his home town club are on tour. Earlier, the Newcastle manager, Kevin Keegan, said Shearer will probably make his debut for Newcastle in the Charity Shield a week on Sunday.

Joe Royle, the Everton manager, has returned to his former club, Oldham, to buy the 23-year-old goalkeeper Paul Gerrard for £1m, rising by 50 per cent after a set number of appearances. The Belgian right-back, Reggie Genoux, of Standard Liège, is set to join Coventry's bulging ranks for £1.7m.

Wolverhampton Wanderers have signed the Manchester

City captain, Keith Curle, on a three-year contract for £650,000.

The Sheffield Wednesday manager, David Pleat, has given the Juventus forward Attilio Lombardo until Saturday to complete a £3.5m transfer to Hillsborough. Pleat said: "Our patience is being tested, but we have committed a lot of money and effort into this move and I'm ready to wait just a little longer to see it through."

Bristol Rovers' move to the Memorial Ground has been delayed by safety work at the Bristol rugby union club. Rovers play their opening game of the season, against Peterborough on 17 August, at Twerton Park.

Celtic are facing a second investigation by Fifa, the world governing body, to determine the part Paolo Barbosa, an unlicensed agent, played in the signing of Jorge Cadete. The Parkhead club were also questioned yesterday about Alan Stubbs' move from Bolton.

Artur Jorge has been appointed coach of Portugal's national team for the second time, less than 24 hours after his seven-month term with Switzerland came to an end. Jorge, 50, will replace Antonio Oliveira, who led Portugal to the quarter-finals of Euro '96 last month. Oliveira has moved to the Portuguese champions, Porto.

Surrey keep their treble dream alive

The Surrey captain, Alec Stewart, kept his side on course for a treble when they cruised to a five-wicket victory in their weather-hit NatWest Trophy quarter-final tie against Somerset at The Oval yesterday.

The win earns Surrey, who are joint top of the Championship and leaders of the Sunday League, a home semi-final against Essex on 13 August.

Stewart admitted afterwards: "I'm desperate for us to win something as a player and as a captain. When we won the NatWest in 1982 I wasn't part of the side. We're challenging for three competitions and I'll be happy to win any one of them."

Surrey resumed on 126 for 4, with 25 overs in which to knock off the required 100 runs to pass Somerset's 225, made yesterday before bad light ended proceedings early.

Butcher, the man of the match, added 39 more runs to his overnight 52 as he and Hollis took Surrey to within 22 runs of victory. At that point Butcher was stumped off a Keith Parsons wide after spending more than three hours at the crease.

Hollis saw them through, though, finishing 45 not out as they reached 226 for 5 with more than seven of their allotted 60 overs remaining.

Lancashire yesterday welcomed another Roses battle with Yorkshire after the arch-rivals were paired together for next month's NatWest Trophy semi-finals. Mike Watkinson's side, who beat Yorkshire by a wicket at the same stage in the Benson and Hedges Cup last month, will again have home advantage following the draw.

NATWEST TROPHY Semi-final draw: Lancashire v Yorkshire (10th Trafford); Surrey v Essex (The Oval). Ties to be played on 13 August.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

NatWest Trophy Quarter-final

Surrey v Somerset

THE OVAL, Surrey (First day of play)

SOMERSET 225 in 50 overs (120.0)

Bowler: S. B. P. J. A. 4-61

SURREY — First innings

Overseas: 125 for 4

M. A. Butcher at Turner 6-91

A. J. Hollis not out 6-226

S. B. P. J. A. 4-61

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Baseball

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sport

OLYMPIC GAMES

Rhythms out of sync with Olympic spirit

Ribbons and pretty lights cannot mask the absurdity of some of the latest sports to win medal status, laments Ken Jones

To quote from David Wallerstein's *History of the Olympic Games*, the idea behind the modern pentathlon is that a soldier is ordered to deliver a message. He starts out on an unfamiliar horse, but is forced to dismount and fight a duel with swords. He escapes, but is trapped and has to shoot his way out with a pistol. Then he swims across a river, and finally finishes his assignment by running 4,000 metres through woods.

If conceived as an officer-class event, nothing probably was seen to better represent the Olympic ideal put forth 100 years ago by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Games.

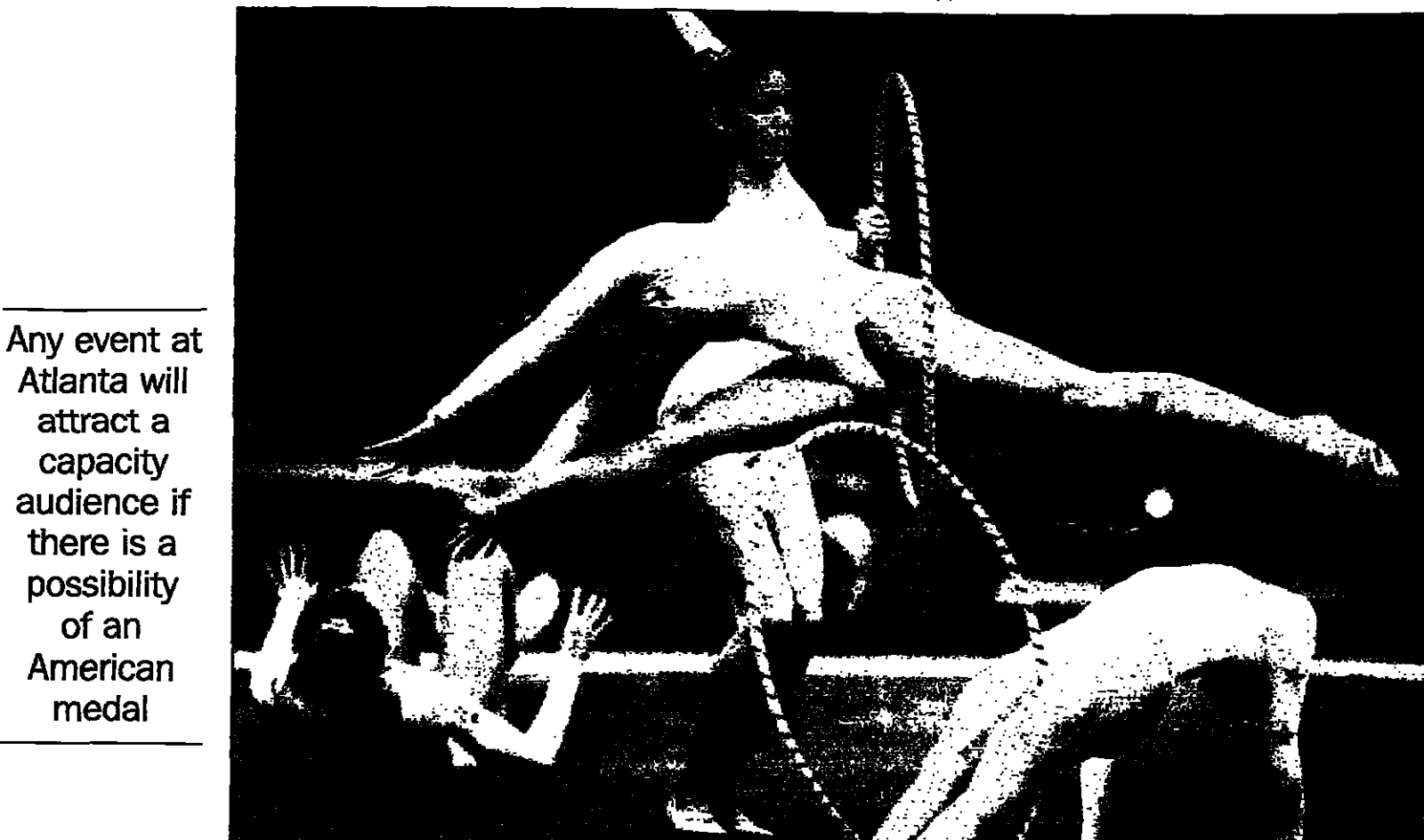
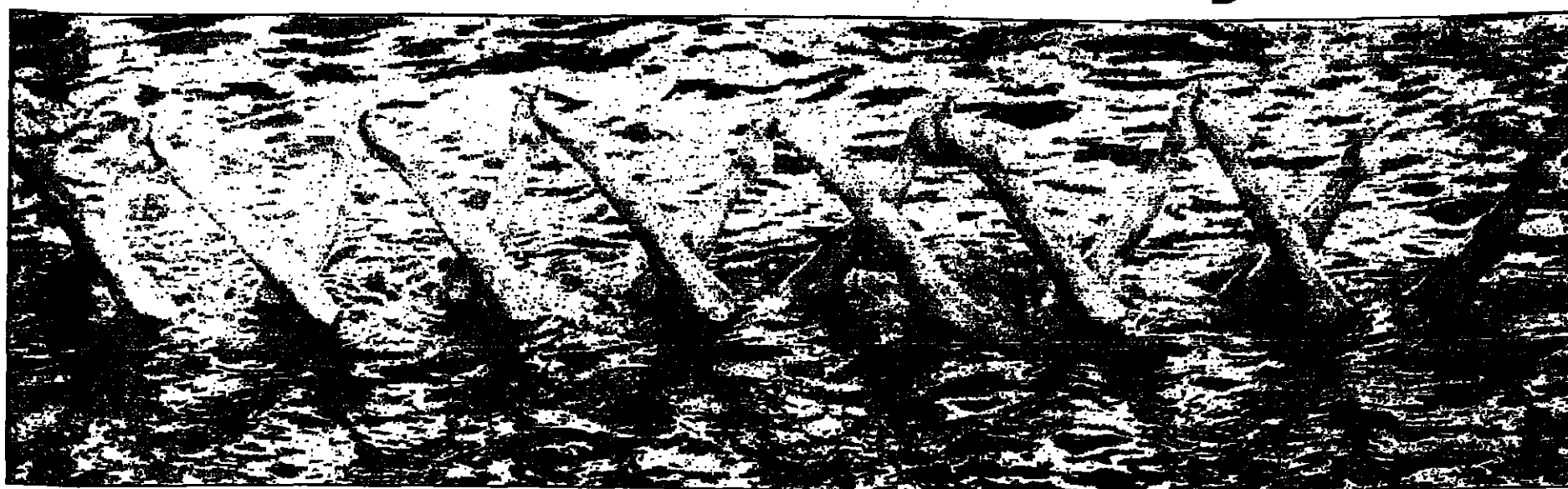
That the pentathlon is now threatened with extinction, one of the sports coming under close scrutiny by the International Olympic Committee, signifies an attitude born of rampant commercial exploitation and the escalating demands of television.

For the pentathlon, boxing and related events that echo trials of combat on which the ancient Games were founded, Atlanta 1996 is a year of Olympic foreboding.

Part of the IOC's policy seems to be that if you can't slap a logo on it get rid of it. Instead the ludicrous beauty-shop trivium of synchronised swimming and rhythmic gymnastics, the absurdity of beach volleyball.

Can you imagine this? During training at Emory University this week, rhythmic gymnasts expressed concern that cool blasts of air would mess up their ribbons. Lights sighted on the arena's dark ceiling were also considered to be a problem. "The equipment gets lost in those lights," the Russian ribbon champion, Amina Zaripova, said. "I have a black ball and black clubs, so I may need to put white tape or something on them."

Poor girls. Such problems. "I just hope they get the air conditioning right," the US national champion, Jessica Davis, said, recalling that her ribbon got so tangled during an event here last May that several seconds were lost while she unknotted it.



Sport or spectacle? The Russian synchronised swimming team (above) make patterns in the water while the rhythmic gymnasts of the American team jump through hoops in order to impress the judges. Photographs: Empics (top) and AFP

Any event at Atlanta will attract a capacity audience if there is a possibility of an American medal

Apparently, coping with such difficulties separates the best from the rest. "I haven't done anything special to prepare for the air conditioning," Elena Vitrichenko, the Ukraine's 1996 world ribbon champion, said. "At this level,

you should deal with anything." Spangles and splashes at the pool. Pretty as peacocks, hair held in sequinned caps, the synchronised swimmers drew rapturous applause for routines some of us older guys re-

member from Esther Williams movies. Japan were a dazzle of lime green suits, cartwheeling and karate-kicking their way into the pool to Ninja music.

For Canada it was crosses on the chest and Beethoven's "Ode to Joy", while the Americans

modestly took the plunge to strains of the "Hallelujah Chorus". Some admiration can be held out for the lung power of these pulchritudinous performers, but what synchronised swimming means in traditional Olympic

terms is beyond this reporter. As there was a large and enthusiastic crowd the obvious conclusion is that any event at Atlanta will attract a capacity audience if there is the possibility of an American medal.

The debate over what constitutes a sport is endless. The ancient games began with foot races, to which events of a combative nature - boxing, wrestling and the hurling of missiles - were later added. Foot races and field events remain the pinnacle of Olympic

The Olympics have ballooned to absurd limits, made unwieldy by events that normally struggle to draw files

achievement but are now surrounded by froth, and to this observer, there is something quite ridiculous about the lip-smacking enthusiasm with which the IOC addresses further intrusions on the Olympic ethos.

Maybe it is simply a case of administrators endeavouring to swim with the recreational tide, but the job is done with the gusto of corporate entrepreneurs seizing on chances to make deals.

Unquestionably, to my mind, the Olympics have ballooned to absurd limits, made unwieldy by events that normally struggle to draw files.

However, it is not just the frilliness to which the IOC should be paying attention. For example, professionalisation has made a nonsense of the basketball tournament, now a walkover for American multi-millionaires, the "Dream Team", a grotesque insult to the concept of democratic competition.

The IOC would happily drop boxing for the reasons that it cannot be marketed and is a turn-off for the distaff television audience. Shortly after bidding successfully for these Games, the Atlanta organising committee approached Augusta National, home of the Masters, with a view to staging an Olympic golf tournament. It almost reached fruition, but no more of a case can be held out for golf here than can be made for tennis and football.

You can go on and like this, standing up one Olympic event, knocking down another, vulnerable to disparate conclusions.

What cannot be avoided is that the Olympics are now held in the grip of intense corporate activity. Earlier this week a member of the US softball team was reprimanded for appearing in a training suit provided by a rival kit sponsor. The influence of the main sports shoe manufacturers, Nike and Reebok, is overwhelming.

A golf tournament would have been swooped on by the makers of golf equipment and clothing. A similar philosophy applied to the introduction of tennis at the 1988 Seoul Games, and baseball in Barcelona four years ago.

What next? There is talk that ballroom dancing and snooker will play a part, if first as exhibition sports, at the next Olympics in Sydney. "Why not?" asked a man of romantic mind this week. Daft as it may sound, there are even people out there pressing a case for bodybuilding.

Sciandri leads the break to win bronze

Slocombe's squad ready for revenge

Max Sciandri brought British cycling to the brink of Olympic glory yesterday. The Derby-born rider, who was brought up in Italy and used his British birthright to earn a Games place, gave his new team their first road race bronze for 40 years.

Not since Alan Jackson's third in Melbourne had British road racing been in the Olympic medals and Sciandri was the man who put the match to the short fuse of a highly charged race which for the first time included the mainstream professionals from Europe.

The gold fell to Switzerland's Pascal Richard who left



his sprint until the last 50 metres to edge out Rolf Sorensen of Denmark, with Sciandri third two seconds behind.

As the 222-kilometre race around the uptown suburb of Buckhead reached its climax Sciandri, not for the first time, responded to an attack by American Lance Armstrong.

The Texan's desperate last bid to win a cycling gold for the

United States failed as Sciandri, Sorensen and Richard raced clear.

The three had been teammates in the past but as Richard said after receiving his medal: "This is the Olympics and it is every man for himself. They may have been my team-mates and we knew each other's strengths but today it was down to the individual."

The race around 17 laps of the well-heeled suburb past neat lawns and flowerbeds of mansions owned by millionaires was always lively.

It was not, however, until the last eight laps that the tempo

rose to produce a group of 12 leaders from whom the decisive move came.

Sciandri who has suffered all season from injuries and illness said: "It was a very confused race and I did not know what was happening. I was lucky to be in that move."

"Maybe I went a little too early, but if I had not done that, I wouldn't have had a chance of winning the gold."

He was, however, the driving force that finally broke up a very influential group and he rode the race of his life to vindicate any criticism of his selection.

Sue Slocombe, the Great Britain coach, says that her team have a score to settle when they take on the Netherlands, the European champions, in today's play-off for the Olympic bronze medal.

Britain have not beaten the Dutch for seven years. "They've improved steadily as the tournament has progressed, but so have we," she said.

"There isn't a lot to choose between both sides in terms of skill and technique, and I think they've both shown that they're coping well with the pressures of playing in the Olympic Games."



"They have several players we'll have to watch very carefully, but in the end I think it will come down to fitness and mental toughness."

"It's also essential to get shots on target because a lot of goalkeepers have proved to be vulnerable here."

"It doesn't help that they have to wear so much kit in the heat and humidity, and I believe

that has affected their judgement."

Britain's goalkeeper, Hilary Rose, of Sutton Coldfield, is expected to have returned to full fitness after injuring a rib in Tuesday's convincing 5-0 win against Argentina, and the stunning return to form of striker Jane Sissmuth, who scored a hat-trick in the game, has given the squad added confidence.

"We've had some ups and downs and it feels like we've been here an eternity," said the captain, Jill Atkins, one of eight players who were bronze medalists at the Barcelona Games. "We've had a good

rest and will be back fighting for the bronze."

Slocombe, a university lecturer from Bristol, added that she had not yet made a decision about her future. "I've been involved in the game as an international player and coach for 26 years, and reaching the medal stages here has been the highlight of my career," she said.

"I shall consider the future when I return in a holiday. There have been many, many lows and too few highs. But whatever the outcome of tomorrow's match, I shall cherish the memories."



The number of times Alexander Johnson of Australia fell off his mount in the show jumping section of the modern pentathlon. Johnson lost his stirrups during his troubled ride on Kirby and found jumping extremely difficult. After the final jump he slipped on to the horse's neck and hung on desperately past the finishing line. But on falling, Kirby's hoof clipped Johnson on the back of his hat. He took a while to get up and remounted to leave the arena, but not before hurling away his stirrups and whip.

Dutch set for dressage gold

Anky van Grunsven's outstanding performance yesterday at Georgia's international horse park. Conyers, has put the Netherlands in line for its first Olympic gold medal in dressage.

Riding the 13-year-old Bonfire, with his familiar high knee action, van Grunsven, 28, scored 1670 for her Grand Prix special test which, combined with Saturday's Grand Prix result, has put the Dutch rider a mere 1.5 marks ahead of Germany's Isabell Werth on Gigo-la.

There has been intense rivalry between these two riders since the 1994 world championships in the Hague when van Grunsven, who is trained by Sief Jannssen, won the world freestyle title and Werth won the Grand Prix special.

For the first time in Olympic dressage the scores from both these tests and from the Grand Prix will be combined to give a



single medal winner.

Van Grunsven will start as the clear favourite for the individual gold in Saturday's freestyle competition for which she has had a new music score specially composed.

Richard Davison, who is Britain's sole representative in the Grand Prix special, failed to qualify for the freestyle on the nine-year-old Askari.

But this was only the second international Grand Prix special of Askari's career and Davison was quite pleased with the youngster. "He was feeling tired but he still tried hard," said Davison.

The order for Britain's show jumping team into today's Nations Cup to decide the team

medals is Nick Skelton (Show Time), Michael Whitaker (Two Step), Geoff Bilton (It's Otto), and John Whitaker (Welham).

Blood tests carried out on Two Step after his poor performance on Monday indicates that he has suffered a slight virus. And Whitaker thinks the horse's back has also been troubling him. "We're keeping our fingers crossed," he said yesterday.

Nathias Beaumann, the German event rider, has sent a fax and has also submitted two photographs to the international federation, the FEI, in order to substantiate his allegations that the Argentinian show-jumping team have used illegal training methods at their pre-Olympic site at Pine Top Farm.

The SEI appeal committee is taking this seriously. It has called an urgent meeting to discuss the matter.

SCARLET FACES IN ATLANTA

Yesterday's Olympic bloomers

The latest twist in the continuing saga of the Olympic buses is that the drivers have now gone on strike. They say that replacement buses which have been conscripted from a fleet of school vehicles are just too dangerous to drive.

Eyes are split, fire extinguishers are out of date, steering wheels fall off and doors don't close, which is a bit worrying considering the buses take thousands of children to and from school every day during term time.

The drivers rebelled after being told to drive the buses - which have no radios or air conditioners - to the Georgia International Horse Park in Conyers, which is one of the longest routes in the system. "It would be no different for

us to take one of these buses and kill some people than to put that bomb in Olympic Park," said Katie Brady, a California school bus driver hired to work during the Olympics.

It now seems only a matter of time before the authorities are forced to dust down a stagecoach or two to transport people about, as the current fleet of buses are piling up on the hard-shoulders of the freeways.

The most common sight is and around Atlanta now is no longer an Olympic flag, but a bus driver standing by his vehicle with its bonnet up at the side of the road as he toots around in bemusement and scratches his head, knowing neither where he is or what is wrong with his bus.

Panasonic

Official Worldwide Sponsor
1996 Olympic Games



صلى الله عليه وسلم

It ain't over till the Russian bear sings

All they had to do was hang the gold around his neck. Ronny Weller was so sure he had won the right to call himself the world's strongest man he rolled around the floor with delight. Then, emulating the athlete Michael Johnson, he threw his wooden-soled shoes to the crowd. One to the left. The other to the right.

The German had just lifted 255kg, breaking the world record for the clean and jerk in the process. Gold medals have been earned for a lot less than that. Let's get on with the ceremony. Except in weightlifting, particularly in the super-heavyweight class, anyone can explode out of the warm-up room, hoist the improbable and dump a heavy load of depression on an erstwhile leader. While Weller was celebrating, the nagging thought was that one man, Andrei Chmerkin, was waiting in the wings.

The Russian world champion had no choice. To get gold he had to lift just what Weller had just added another 10kg to the loads on the ends of his bar. To give a sense of what was going on, lift Stiege Redgrave and lift him above your head. But Chmerkin faced much more than

Guy Hodgson reports on weightlifting's dramatic sequence of world records

that. Add Matthew Pinsent, Redgrave's partner in the coxless pairs boat, and still it is not enough. Only if you put Suzy Ellis, the cox for Britain's women's eight, into the equation would you get near the burden that waited, mockingly, on the floor of the Georgia World Congress Center.

Chmerkin, a great bear of a man weighing 160kg and big enough to have a postal code, crowded round the bar before putting his shovel-sized hands at either end. With a massive heave, he grabbed the 260kg weight to his chin, then hoisted it above his head. The bar crashed to the ground, making the sound of a distant cannon, and for a moment Chmerkin was still, almost in disbelief. With a modest wave to the crowd, he hugged his coaches. Weller, meanwhile, buried his head in his hands.

"I just thought of winning," Chmerkin said. "If someone one had gone higher I could have done more." As his total for the snatch and the clean and jerk was an Olympic record of 456kg (1,008lb), it would have been a brave man to argue. Whatever you think about weightlifting—and the International Olympic Committee are so concerned about the incidence of steroid abuse that consideration is being given to its exclusion from the Games—there is no doubt it is magnificent theatre. These boys are no shrink-

How heavy is 260kg?

The same weight as Henry, the Malaysian Tapti, at London Zoo... or three stones heavier than England's three-man defence in the Euro Cup semi-final against Germany. Barry Adams: 130kg; 110lb; Gary Spillings: 120kg; 110lb; Stuart Pearce: 120kg; 110lb.

or shrink-violets, taking the stage with such a swagger that in comparison Eric Cantona looks as self-deprecating as Uriah Heap. They pose, they strut, they point. Indeed, they show just about every childish trait of the playground, but at that size what the hell. "Jeans in this nightclub? In your case go ahead, sir."

The crowd loved it and no one more so than the American Mark Henry, who whipped the spectators into a frenzy before

defying medical advice to complete a clean and jerk despite earlier tearing back muscles.

"The doctor told me not to go out there, but I made that last lift for the team," Henry said. Never mind, at nearly 32 stone (about 203kg) he had broken one record as the heaviest athlete in an Olympic Games and his immediate future is assured having signed a multi-million pound contract to join the World Wrestling Federation.

Henry has said he is leaving the sport because of what he claims is the rampant use of steroids, which leaves non-users like him at a disadvantage. "I think he really has a beefy of weightlifting right now," Terry Todd, his coach, said. "I think you would, anyone would, if you hear promises of a new testing procedure leveling the playing field, and the playing field could get less level. Why put yourself in the situation where it looks like outsiders are kicking the stuffing out of you when the truth is different."

The truth is, no one knows about weightlifting, like they do not know about most Olympic sports. All you can do is watch and hope what you are seeing is clean. And, in the case of Chmerkin, marvel.

Weight and see: The super-heavyweight Andrei Chmerkin of Russia celebrates his Olympic record total of 456 kilos

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS FROM ATLANTA

Archery

WOMEN: Individual 70m third round: Kazuo Watanabe (Jpn) 156; 158; 159; 160; 161; 162; 163; 164; 165; 166; 167; 168; 169; 170; 171; 172; 173; 174; 175; 176; 177; 178; 179; 180; 181; 182; 183; 184; 185; 186; 187; 188; 189; 190; 191; 192; 193; 194; 195; 196; 197; 198; 199; 200; 201; 202; 203; 204; 205; 206; 207; 208; 209; 210; 211; 212; 213; 214; 215; 216; 217; 218; 219; 220; 221; 222; 223; 224; 225; 226; 227; 228; 229; 230; 231; 232; 233; 234; 235; 236; 237; 238; 239; 240; 241; 242; 243; 244; 245; 246; 247; 248; 249; 250; 251; 252; 253; 254; 255; 256; 257; 258; 259; 260; 261; 262; 263; 264; 265; 266; 267; 268; 269; 270; 271; 272; 273; 274; 275; 276; 277; 278; 279; 280; 281; 282; 283; 284; 285; 286; 287; 288; 289; 290; 291; 292; 293; 294; 295; 296; 297; 298; 299; 300; 301; 302; 303; 304; 305; 306; 307; 308; 309; 310; 311; 312; 313; 314; 315; 316; 317; 318; 319; 320; 321; 322; 323; 324; 325; 326; 327; 328; 329; 330; 331; 332; 333; 334; 335; 336; 337; 338; 339; 340; 341; 342; 343; 344; 345; 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